





Sui Generis

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-Keith

Sui Generis is a journal that seeks to represent work in translation and multilingual poetry, fiction, and non-fiction within the Bard College community. It appears annually in the spring.

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Spanish

Fragmentos Para Dominar el Silencio
Por Alejandra Pizarnik

1

Las fuerzas del lenguaje son las damas solitarias, desoladas, que cantan a través de mi voz que escucho a lo lejos. Y lejos, en la negra arena, yace una niña densa de música ancestral. ¿Dónde la verdadera muerte? He querido iluminarme a la luz de mi falta de luz. Los ramos se mueren en la memoria. La yacente anida en mí con su máscara de loba. La que no pudo más e imploró llamas y ardimos.

2

Cuando a la casa del lenguaje se le vuela el tejado y las palabras no guarecen, yo hablo.

Las damas de rojo se extraviaron dentro de sus máscaras aunque regresarán para sollozar entre flores.

No es muda la muerte. Escucho el canto de los enlutados sellar las hendiduras del silencio. Escucho tu dulcísimo llanto florecer mi silencio gris.

3

La muerte ha restituido al silencio su prestigio hechizante. Y yo no diré mi poema y yo he de decirlo. Aun si el poema (aquí, ahora) no tiene sentido, no tiene destino.

2

Fragments for the Domination of Silence
by Alejandra Pizarnik
Translation by Emely Paulino

1

The forces of language are the lonely ladies, desolate, who sing through my voice that I hear far away. And far away, in the dark sand, a girl is born thick with ancestral music. Where is real death? I have wanted to illuminate myself in the light of my lack of light. The bouquets perish in memory. The recumbent one nests in me with its wolf mask. The one who couldn't anymore and implored flames and we burned.

2

When the roof of the house of language gets blown away and the words no longer shelter us, I speak.

The ladies in red got lost within their masks, even though they'll return to whimper among flowers.

Death is not mute. I hear the song of those in mourning seal the crevice of silence. I hear your sweetest tears blossom my gray silence.

3

Death has returned to silence its enchanting prestige. And I won't share my poem and I should say it. Even if the poem (here, now) does not make sense, it does not have a fate.

3

Hija del Viento
Por Alejandra Pizarnik

Han venido.
Invaden la sangre.
Huelen a plumas,
a carencia,
a llanto.
Pero tú alimentas al miedo
y a la soledad
como a dos animales pequeños
perdidos en el desierto.

Han venido
a incendiar la edad del sueño.
Un adiós es tu vida.
Pero tú te abrazas
como la serpiente loca de movimiento
que sólo se halla a sí misma
porque no hay nadie.

Tú lloras debajo de tu llanto,
tú abres el cofre de tus deseos
y eres más rica que la noche.

Pero hace tanta soledad
que las palabras se suicidan.

Daughter of Wind
by Alejandra Pizarnik
Translation by Emely Paulino

They have come.
Invading the blood.
Smelling like feathers,
like deprivation,
like weeping.
But you nourish fear
and loneliness
like two small animals
lost in the desert.

They have come
to ignite the age of dreams.
Your life is a goodbye.
But you embrace yourself
like the serpent gone mad with movement
that finds only herself
because no one is there.

You weep beneath your weeping
you open the chest of your dreams
and are wealthier than the night.

But there is so much solitude
that words kill themselves.

La jaula
Por Alejandra Pizarnik

Afuera hay sol.
No es más que un sol
pero los hombres lo miran
y después cantan.

Yo no sé del sol.
Yo sé la melodía del ángel
y el sermón caliente
del último viento.
Sé gritar hasta el alba
cuando la muerte se posa desnuda
en mi sombra.

Yo lloro debajo de mi nombre.
Yo agito pañuelos en la noche
y barcos sedientos de realidad
bailan conmigo.
Yo oculto clavos
para escarnecer a mis sueños enfermos.

Afuera hay sol.
Yo me visto de cenizas.

The Cage
by Alejandra Pizarnik
Translation by Emely Paulino

Outside there is sun
It's nothing but a sun
But men look at it
and then sing.

I know nothing of the sun.
I know the angel's melody
and the warm sermon
of the last wind.
I know how to shout until dawn
when death poses naked
in my shadow.

I weep beneath my name.
I rustle handkerchiefs at night
and ships athirst for reality
dance with me.
I conceal nails
to deride my sick dreams.

There is sun outside.
I dress myself in ashes.

En Paz
Por Amando Nervo

Muy cerca de mi ocaso, yo te bendigo, vida,
porque nunca me diste ni esperanza fallida,
ni trabajos injustos, ni pena inmerecida;

porque veo al final de mi rudo camino
que yo fui el arquitecto de mi propio destino;

que si extraje la miel o la hiel de las cosas,
fue porque en ellas puse hiel o mieles sabrosas:
cuando planté rosales, coseché siempre rosas.

...Cierto, a mis lozanías va a seguir el invierno:
¡mas tú no me dijiste que mayo fuese eterno!

Hallé sin duda largas noches de mis penas;
mas no me prometiste tú sólo noches buenas;
y en cambio tuve algunas santamente serenas...

Amé, fui amado, el sol acarició mi faz.
¡Vida, nada me debes! ¡Vida, estamos en paz!

In Peace
by Amando Nervo
Translation by Aisha King

Very close to my decline I bless you, life,
Because you never gave me false hope,
Nor unjust labor, nor undeserved sorrow

Because I see at the end of my rough road
I was the architect of my own fate;

If I extract honey or bile from things,
It was because I had sown sweet honey or nettles:
When I planted rose bushes, I harvested only soft petals.

...True, after my blossoms winter will follow:
But you never told me May was eternal!

True, I endured long nights of sorrow;
But you never promised me only good nights;
And in fact some were simply serene...

I loved, I was loved, the sun caressed my face.
Life, you owe me nothing! Life, we are in peace!

1

De Duodecima Poesía Vertical
Por Roberto Juarrez

Sacar la palabra del lugar de la palabra
y ponerla en el sitio de aquello que no habla:
los tiempos agotados,
las esperas sin nombre,
las armonías que nunca se consuman,
las vigencias desdeñadas,
las corrientes en suspenso.

Lograr que la palabra adopte
el licor olvidado
de lo que no es palabra,
sino expectante mutismo
al borde del silencio,
en el contorno de la rosa,
en el atrás sin sueño de los pájaros,
en la sombra casi hueca del hombre.

Y así sumado el mundo,
abrir el espacio novísimo
donde la palabra no sea simplemente
un signo para hablar
sino también para callar,
canal puro del ser,
forma para decir o no decir,
con el sentido a cuestas
como un dios a la espalda.

Quizá el revés de un dios,
quizá su negativo. O tal vez su modelo.

1

From 12th Vertical Poetry
by Roberto Juarrez
Translation by Kevin P. Soto

Remove the word from the place of the word
and place it at the site of what does not speak:
exhausted times,
nameless waits,
never completed harmonies
rejected validities
suspended currents.

Make the word adopt
the forgotten liquor
of what is not word
but expectant mutism
on the verge of silence
in the contour of the rose,
in the dreamless space behind birds,
in the almost-empty shadow of man.

And thus, summed up the world
to open the newest space
where the word is not simply
a sign for speaking
but also for being silent,
a pure channel of being,
a form for saying or not saying,
burden with meaning
like a god on the back.

Perhaps the inverse of a god,
perhaps its negative. Or maybe its model.

6

De Novena Poesía Vertical
Por Roberto Juarrez

Todo se apoya en algo
o cuelga de algo.

Pero ¿dónde se apoya
o de qué cuelga el centro?

Tal vez se apoye en su propia periferia
y también cuelgue de ella.

La rosa se apoya en la tierra
pero en verdad cuelga del cielo.

El pensar se apoya en un desliz del cuerpo,
pero en verdad cuelga del sueño.

El amor se apoya en un espacio recortado,
pero en verdad cuelga de un tiempo recortado.

La presencia se apoya en lo que hay,
pero en verdad cuelga de lo que no hay.

El centro se apoya en un vacío,
pero en verdad cuelga de otro.

6

From 9th Vertical Poetry
by Roberto Juarrez
Translation by Kevin P. Soto

Everything leans on something
or hangs from something.

But what place is there for the center
to lean on or to hang from?

Perhaps it leans on its own periphery
and hangs from it as well.

The rose leans on the earth
but in truth hangs from the sky.

Thought leans on a slip of the body,
but in truth hangs from a dream.

Love leans on an abbreviated space
but in truth hangs from abbreviated time.

Presence leans on what is there
but in truth hangs from what is not there

The center leans on a void
but in truth hangs from another.

Русский

Russian

Заклятие Смехом
по Велимир Хлебников

О, рассмейтесь, смехачи!
О, засмейтесь, смехачи!
Что смеются смехами, что смеянствуют смеяльно,
О, засмейтесь усмеяльно!
О, рассмешищ надсмеяльных — смех усмейных смехачей!
О, иссмейся рассмеяльно, смех надсмейных смеячей!
Смейево, смейево,
Усмей, осмей, смешики, смешики,
Смеюнчики, смеюнчики.
О, рассмейтесь, смехачи!
О, засмейтесь, смехачи!

Incantation by Laughter
by Velimir Khlebnikov
Translation by Daniel Krakovski

O Laugh, you lifwithin laughenfafs!
O Faugh, you laughminsters!
How they do laugh with laughter, laughtaciously laughcack!
O faugh laughmatically!
O laffé on yee laughy-taffed—laughter of bequaughed
Laughenfafs!
O delaughidate laughingly, laughter of bequenched
gaffelaughs!
Laughélló, laughélló
Alaff, alaugh, laughpawns, laughpawns,
Liffalaughs, Liffalaughs.
O Laugh, you lifwithin laughenfafs!
O Faugh, you laughminsters!

Я знал

по Константин Бальмонт

М. А. Лохвицкой

Я знал, что, однажды тебя увидав,
Я буду любить тебя вечно.
Из женственных женщин богиню избрав,
Я жду — я люблю — бесконечно.

И если обманна, как всюду, любовь,
Любовью и мы усладимся,
И если с тобою мы встретимся вновь,
Мы снова чужими простимся.

А в час преступления, улыбок, и сна
Я буду — ты будешь — далеко,
В стране, что для нас навсегда создана,
Где нет ни любви, ни порока.

I Knew

by Konstantine Balmont

Translation by Jared C. Hester

I knew, that, once I saw you,
I was going to love you forever.
From the womanly women like goddesses picked,
I wait – loving you – without ending.

And be it a trick, like everywhere, love is,
Then we shall with love be indulged,
And if you and I are to meet again,
We will part anew like strangers.

Yet, at the time of a crime, smiles, and dream,
I will be – and you will be – far apart,
In a land, that for us to live on was made,
Where neither love nor vice be found.

Я сбросил ее
по Константин Бальмонт

Я сбросил ее с высоты,
И чувствовал тяжесть паденья.
Колдунья прекрасная! Ты
Придешь, но придешь - как виденье!

Ты мучить не будешь меня,
А радовать страшной мечтою,
Создание тьмы и огня,
С проклятой твоей красою!

Я буду лобзать в забытьи,
В безумстве кошмарного пира,
Румяные губы твои,
Кровавые губы вампира!

И если я прежде был твой,
Теперь ты мое привиденье,
Тебя я страшнее - живой,
О, тень моего наслажденья!

Лежи искаженным комком,
Обломок погибшего зданья.
Ты больше не будешь врагом...
Так помни, мой друг: До свиданья!

I Threw Her
by Konstantine Balmont
Translation by Jared C. Hester

I threw her off from the heights,
And felt the weight of the falling.
The beautiful witch! You'll
Be back...back to haunt me!

You won't torture me,
Rather you'll beam at my frightening dream
Made of shadows and flames,
With your damned beauty!

I'm going to kiss in oblivion,
In the craze of a nightmarish feast,
Those ruddy red lips of yours -
Those bloody red lips of a vampire!

And if ever I was yours,
Now you are my ghost.
I'm scarier than you - alive,
Oh, shade of my own sweet cravings!

Lie down like a warbled clot,
A chunk off a murdered building.
From now on you're no longer my foe...
But remember this, my friend: *It was good to see you go!*

Ἑλληνικός

Ancient Greek

Fragment 16
Ψάπφω

Οἱ μὲν ἰππῆων στρότον, οἱ δὲ πέσδων,
οἱ δὲ νάων φαῖσ' ἐπὶ γᾶν μέλαιναν
ἔμμεναι κάλλιστον, ἐγὼ δὲ κῆν' ὄτ-
τω τις ἔραται

πάγχυ δ' εὔμαρες σύνετον πόησαι
πάντι τοῦτ'· ἅ γὰρ πολὺ περσκέθοισα
κάλλος ἀνθρώπων Ἑλένα τὸν ἄνδρα
τὸν πανάριστον

καλλίποισ' ἔβας 'ς Τροίαν πλέοισα
κωὺδὲ παῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων τοκῆων
πάμπαν ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν
οὐκ ἀέκοισαν

Κύπρις· εὐκαμπτον γὰρ ἔφω βρότων κῆρ
] κούφως τ . . . οη . . . ν
κάμε νῦν Ἀνακτορίας ὀνέμναι-
σ' οὐ παρεοίσας

τᾶς κε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα
κάμάρυγμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω
ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι
πεσοδομάχεντας.

Fragment 16
by Sappho
Translation by Ryan Warwick

Some say that an army of horsemen
is best on this black earth,
others say ships or footmen
I say that it is whatever someone loves.

It is easy to make this thing understandable to everyone.
For Helen, greatly excelling in beauty,
leaving the best man of all,

Stepped towards Troy, sailing,
entirely forgot her child and dear parents,
and drove herself...

...who now reminds me of Anaktoria
the one that got away.

I would rather see her sweet step,
the glistening light of her face
than the chariots of the Lydians,
and those fighting on foot with weapons

Fragment 16

by Sappho

Interpretive Translation by Ryan Warwick

Sometimes two

people: me

you

moments: then

now

split eternal not here anymore,

we plural join to clash again

face to face with spears

sharped on face forgotten

The light in a stranger's eyes, sailing,
losing everything it had been before
sometimes flashes bright

the sun just off the horizon

becomes that same light

on Troy's salt sea.

Fragment 31

Ψάπφω

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν
ἔμμεν' ὦνηρ, ὅττις ἐναντιός τοι
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδου φωνεί-
σας ὑπακούει

καὶ γελαίσας ἡμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν,
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε' ὥς με φώνας
οὔδεν ἔτ' εἴκει,

ἀλλὰ κάμ μὲν γλώσσα +ἔαγε, λέπτον
δ' αὐτικά χρώϊ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμακεν,
ὀπάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημμ', ἐπιρρόμ-
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,

κάδ' δέ ἴδρωσ κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω ἴπιδεύης
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐτα.

ἀλλὰ πᾶν τόλματον, ἐπεὶ καὶ πένητα

Fragment 31
by Sappho
Translation by Ryan Warwick

He seems like a god to me,
the man who sits opposite you,
and she speaking sweetly nearby
is heard in return.

Even laughing desirously!
This shakes my heart in my chest:
When I look at you, even for a short time
No word comes for me to speak,

but my tongue breaks in silence
and a thin fire runs under my skin.
I see nothing with my eyes
and my ears fill with static.

Cold sweat has me and tremors
seize me whole. I am greener than grass
and I seem to myself
to be little short of dying

But it all must be undertaken, because...

Fragment 31
by Sappho
Interpretive Translation by Ryan Warwick

Deus nobis haec otia fecit

Quis deus ill' est
idleness, endless dust
has ruined even you,
stolen voice from your mouth.

It sings again
but with its tongue broken,
a deeper voice.

Skin greener than grass
has dried to black
ink *in calamo*.

That death mosaic your cheeks
cut up, reticulate

You will always be short of dying
and we will have forgotten why.

日本人

Japanese

「夜中の汽笛について、あるいは物語の効用について」

村上春樹

女の子が男の子に質問する。「あなたはどれくらい私のことを好き？」

少年はしばらく考えてから、静かな声で、「夜中の汽笛くらい」と答える。

少女は黙って話の続きを待つ。そこにはきつと何かお話があるに違いない。

「あるとき夜中にふと目が覚める」と彼は話し始める。「正確な時刻はわからない。多分二時か三時か、そんなものだと思う。でも何時かというのはそれほど重要なことじゃない。とにかくそれは真夜中で、僕はまったくのひとりぼっちで、まわりには誰もいない。いいかい、想像してみたい。あたりは真っ暗で、何も見えない。物音ひとつ聞こえない。時計の針が時を刻む音だって聞こえないー時計はとまってしまったのかもしれないな。そして僕は突然、自分が知っている誰からも、自分が知っているどこの場所からも、信じられないくらい遠く隔てられ、引き離されているんだと感じる。自分が、この広い世界の中で誰からも愛されず、誰からも声をかけられず、誰にも思い出してもらえない存在になってしまっていることがわかる。たとえば僕がそのまま消えてしまったとしても誰も気づかないだろう。それはまるで厚い鉄の箱に詰められて、深い海の底に沈められたような気持ちなんだよ。気圧のせいで心臓が痛くて、そのままふたつにびりびりと張り裂けてしまいそうなーそういう気持ちってわかるかな？」

少女はうなずく。たぶんわかると思う。

少年は続ける。「それはおそらく人間が活着ている中で経験するいちばん辛いことのひとつなんだ。本当にそのまま死んでしまいたいくらい悲しくて辛い気持ちだ。いや、そうじゃない、死んでしまいたいというようなことじゃなくて、そのまま放っておけば、箱の中の空気が薄くなって実際に死んでしまうはずだ。

それはたとえなんかじゃない。ほんとうのことなんだよ。それが真夜中にひとりぼっちで、目を覚ますことの意味なんだ。それもわかる？」

少女はまた黙ってうなずく。少年は少し間を置く。

「でもそのときずっと遠くで汽笛の音が聞こえる。それはほんとうにほんとうに遠い汽笛なんだ。いったいどこに鉄道の線路なんかがあるのか、僕にもわからない。それくらい遠くなんだ。聞こえたか聞こえないかというくらいの音だ。でもそれが汽車の汽笛であることは僕にはわかる。間違いない。僕は暗闇の中でじっと耳を澄ます。そしてもう一度、その汽笛を耳にする。それから僕の心臓は痛むことをやめる。時計の針は動き始める。鉄の箱は海面へ向けてゆっくり浮かび上がっていく。それはみんなその小さな汽笛のせいなんだね。聞こえるか聞こえないか、それくらい微かな汽笛のせいなんだ。そして僕はその汽笛と同じくらい君のことを愛している」

そこで少年の短い物語は終わる。今度は少女が自分の物語を語り始める。

*About the Train Whistle in the Night, or On the
Usefulness of Stories*
by Haruki Murakami
Translation by Krisy Maier

The girl asks the boy a question. "How much do you love me?" The boy will think for just a moment, and then, in a quiet voice, reply, "As much as the train whistle in the night." The girl will be silent and wait for him to continue speaking. No doubt, a story is there. "At some point, I wake up in the middle of the night," he will begin to say. "I don't know the exact moment. I think it is probably at 2 or 3 AM. But, but the time isn't important. Anyway, in the middle of the night, I'm really alone, and there's no one around. Listen, try to imagine. Everything is pitch black all around me, and I can't see a thing. I can't hear a sound. I can't hear the sound of the watch hand mincing time—maybe the watch has stopped. Then, I suddenly feel I'm separated an unbelievably far distance from people I know and places I know. I understand that, in this whole wide world, I am not loved. No one calls out to me. I've become an existence that no one remembers. Probably no one would notice if I disappeared. It feels like I'm stuffed in a heavy, iron box and sinking into a deep sea. My heart aches from the pressure, and it feels like it's being ripped in two and bursting apart—do you understand that feeling?"

The girl will nod. She will think she probably understands.

The boy will continue. "That is probably one of the most painful things a human will ever experience. Really, the feeling is so sad and painful that I want to die. No, that's not it. It's not that I want to die. It's just that being left alone, where the air inside the box grows thin, it seems that I might actually die. That's not some metaphor. It's the truth. That's what it means to wake up all alone in the middle of the night. Am I still making sense?"

The boy and girl will be silent and nod. The boy will pause a little.

"But this time, I hear the sound of the train whistle far away. The train whistle is really, really far away. Where the railroad track is, I don't know. It's so far away that I'm not really sure if I heard it or not. But, I know it's a train whistle. That's certain. In the darkness, I still listen carefully. Then one more time, I hear that train whistle. From then on, my heart stops hurting. The watch hand starts moving. The iron box slowly floats up toward the surface. All that happened because of a small train whistle. All because of a train whistle I can barely hear. So, I love you as much as I love the train whistle."

There, the boy's short tale will end. This time, the girl will tell her own story.

輸入業を営む父親の仕事にくつついてアエノスアイレスに来たものの、なんの知識もなかったのとまどうばかりだった。街が白人ばかりなのも、街並があまりにもヨーロッパに似ているのも、それなのにくつきりと濃い、南米特有の悲しいほど青い空に、ジャガランダの木が枝を伸ばしているのも、新鮮だった。

街を行く女の子たちはみんな妙に老けていて、二十一歳の私なんてまるで中学生に見えるのだろう。ひとりで歩いていてもナンパもされず、スリにもあわなかつた。ホテルのレストランがいやがるほどの古いジーンズに、懸賞で当たった古い古いスラムダンクTシャツを着ていたのがよかつたのかもしれない。そこにGジャンをおれば、どこから見ても貧乏な旅行者だった。その上、ひとりで歩くなら用心しすぎていいくらいだ、と父が言ったので、私は手ぶらで歩いていた。

その日、父は私と別れてひとりでそそくさとギターを買いに行ってしまった。父はクラシックギターが趣味で、演奏はプロ級だった。父はこの国に、観光に来たのでも、本当を言うと出張で来たのでもなく、ただ単に、ギターを買いに来たのだった。取り引きをまとめる仕事は昨日で終わり、父は朝からうきうきしていて朝食の間もギター屋のことで頭がいっぱいだった。はじめは私もその小さな店に入って、本当に美しいギターが並んでいるのを見ていた。人が手をかけて、心を込めて作り、磨きあげ、やがて演奏することによってまた生命の輝きを深めていく楽器というもの……そこには目的のある美しさがあった。父の目は輝き、次々に手にとつて演奏しては、決められないため息をもらしていた。すばらしすぎて、選べないという様子だった。きっと彼は一日中ここにいるだろう、と思い、ホテルで集合することにして、私は店を出た。

来る前にマドンナの映画を観て予習した私は、エビータのお墓でも見てみようか、と思い、コレクティブに乗って、レコレータ地区にある墓地を目指した。

墓地は公園かと思うくらい緑が多かつた。たくさんの方が犬の散歩をしていた。ひとりで何十匹もの犬を散歩させている人もいた。きっとそういう仕事があるのだろう。聖堂があり、高い塔がそびえたっていた。私は墓地に入ってしまった。

そこは、私の思っていたような墓地とは全然違つて異様に立派な建物が並んでいる場所だった。ひとつひとつの墓が一軒の建物になつていて、高くそびえたっていた。これはもはや住宅街だ、と私は思った。広い通路の両脇に、ずらりと家のようなものが並んでほかに続いていく。納骨堂は何人でも入れるくらい大きい。死んだ人たちが入っている家、また家。天使や人物やキリスト様やマリア様の彫像がそれらを彩っている。小さい教会がついている墓も、ガラス張りで自動ドアの納骨堂がついた墓もあった。中には美しい棺桶が段になつて置かれていた。中に階段があつて地下に降りて行ける墓もあった。エビータの墓は確かに今も絶えず人々が訪れるだけあつて新鮮で美しい花がたくさん飾られていたが、墓地全体の豪華な、まるで美術館のような様子に比べて、それほどのインパクトはなかつた。静かな午後の光、静まり返る死者の家たち……その様子はちょうど、昔両親が行つた、ポンペイの遺跡を思い出させた。街はそのままなのに、住んでいる人たちが消え失せたあの静寂。今も当時の活気が匂いのように漂つている石の街。青空を背景に、いつまでも死んだまま静かにしている街。

ずらりと並ぶその墓の街の装飾された建物は、どれもが母のお墓が五十くらい入りそうな墓ばかりだった。そう、母の墓は本当に小さくて、日本の墓地の中でもさらに見つけることが困難なくらいかわいらしいもの

だった。

かつこいい。私がお金持ちになったら、母にこんなすごいお墓を作ってあげようか、と私は思ったが、すぐにその気持ちは消えた。

そうだ、母はこういう小さい家に入ることがなによりもいやだった、と思いついたからだ。

死んでいる人のほうが多いこの場所では、死者を思い出すことが妙に自然だった。角を曲がっても曲がっても、同じような美しい装飾や花に彩られた「墓の街」が続く。光に照らされて陰影がくつきりとして、夢の中を歩いているようだった。ここをいつまでも歩き回っていたら、自然に、死者の国と境がなくなり、足を踏み入れることができそうだと思つた。

母は三年前、癌で死んだ。私はひとりっ子でお母さんっ子だったから、ずいぶん長い間悲しみにくれて、高校を卒業しそこない、人よりも長く高校時代を送ってしまった。バスケットボール部の後輩たちが同学年になり、私はなぜか先輩とよばれる同学年になったため、あだ名は先輩、になってしまった。卒業の時は、後輩からも同級生からも、先輩、卒業おめでとうございますーと言われて愉快だった。その頃には母が残っていた薄くて柔らかい気配も家からすっかり消え、がさつな父と私の気ままな生活の型ができていた。母はこの世からひっそりと消えていった。

母はなんとなく影の薄い人で、小さい頃から、もしかしたらお母さんは長生きしないかもしれないなど私は思っていた。母は欲望をむき出しにすることをせず、大声で笑うこともあまりなく、なにかをあきらめているよ

うなところがあつた。私はそれは父のあまり盛り上がりすぎらないおとなしい性格の影響かと思つていたが、母はずっとそんな感じだった、とお葬式に来た昔の友達はみんなそう言った。ああしたい、こうしたい、というのが薄く、いつもなんとなく受け身な感じがする人だった。

母の母、つまり祖母は、パリに住んでいる有名な画家の愛人だった。母は、私生児だった。祖父は年に三ヶ月くらいは日本に住み、祖母はその間の現地妻だったそうだった。どちらももう死んでしまったので私は祖母にも祖父にも会つたことはないが、たまたま展覧会が来ると行き、「ほほう」と思う。血がつながっているんだ、と不思議に思う。私の好きな浅葱色を多用しているその絵を見ると、そう思う。祖母の肖像もある。目元が母に似ているから、買いたいと思つたら、法外な値段だった。

祖父は老境にさしかかつてから突然恋に狂い、正妻も祖母も投げ出して、二十代の娘と結婚した。正妻がどうなったかは知らないが、祖母は精神に異常をきたした。すべてを失つた祖母の、その時の嘆きようはものすごくかつたらしい。

母は、その話をする時だけは、奇妙に熱を込めた。

私はいつも、影が薄い母がふと消えてしまうのではないか、と不安だったが、その話をしている時の母は、なぜか力強かつた。

時計を見ると、午後三時になろうとしていた。

墓の中は陽ざしもきつく、私はゆっくりと歩いて、またエビータの墓の脇を通り、そこに飾られた様々な献辞や、黒いみかげ石の光るところを見た。そして、少し休むためにとても大きな木の根元に腰を下ろした。かすかに風が渡っていつて汗が乾いた。墓場にはどうしていつも、低く枝を伸ばす大きな木があるのだろうか。死者を慰めるためなのか、死者のエネルギーを吸い取って育つのか。

父はまだギターを選んでいるだろうか。

気のいい父、クラシックギターがこの世でいちばん好きな父。

父と母は新婚旅行でやはりここに来たという。その時も父はギターを買った。母は、ひとつひとつの試し弾きに耳を傾け、根気よく、父の買物につきあった、と父は言った。そして、お母さんは、あるひとつのギターを指差して、あなたの音はこれ、と言ったんだ、それがうちにあるこのギターだよ。お母さんにはそういうミステリアスなところがあつて、そこにすっかりやられてしまったんだね、俺は……と父はのろけたものだった。

母は父と基本的にとっても仲が良かったが、父には私から見ても奇妙なところがあった。私は父方の祖父母をよく知っているが、特に変わったところはなさそうなので、それは父が独自に持っている癖のようなものなのだと思う。小さい頃からそうだった。

たとえば、父の誕生日、母は父の好きな食べ物朝から用意している。父は、必ず早く帰るし、遅くなるようだったら連絡をする、と言う。私もそれを心得て、部活が終わるとすばやく帰ってきた。しかし、ある程度の分別がつく年齢になった頃にはもうわかっていた。そういう時、必ず父は酔って遅く帰ってくる。連絡もしない。それが母や私の誕生日だったら別だった。早引けしても病欠してでも、父は家にいた。しかし父の昇進の時

ものだと思った。

私が母にその話を聞いたことは二回しかない。

一度は、小学生の時だった。その頃はまだ私も母も、父の悪い癖を矯正しようとしていた。なんの祝い事だっただろう。父が夏休みに海外旅行に行こうと言い出したので、そのお礼にこちそうを作ろうという日だっただろうか。

母はよりによって天ぷらを用意し、じっと待っていた。私は耐えきれず、だいたいどうせいつものように父は帰らないだろうと知っていたので、勝手にカップ麺を作つてとりあえず食べていた。母にもひとくちあげた。

母は麺をすすり、ひとこと言った。

「他に女の人がいるとかいうほうが、よほど深刻よね。」

「そうよ。お父さんはまじめすぎるから、こういうかしこまった場が家にあるのがだめなのよ。」

私は言った。

「でもね、こうして、用意をして、天ぷら鍋にも油を入れて、材料もみんなそろえて、ないはずの夕食の時間を待っているとね、お母さん、箱に入っている感じがするの。」

「はあ。」

私は言った。わけがわからない比喩だと思った。

「この感じは、きつと、今、お父さんが外にいる気持ちと似ていると思うの。そういうところがお互いにひかれ

も、独立の時も、親友が事故で亡くなってがっかりしている父を慰める会の時でさえ、いつもなにか父を中心に、父を待って食事をしようとする、父は逃げ出した。親戚とかお客さんと呼んだりすると、ますますだめだった。結局父なしで食事をして、お客さんが帰った後に、つぶれて運ばれてくる父を見るのがおちだった。

幼い時から母が死ぬまで、母も私も何回父を責めただろう。父は悲しそうに言った。

「どうしても、待たれていると思うと、こわくなってしまふんだ。自分でもどうしようもないんだ。そして、足が重くなって、遅くなってしまふ。そうするとますます連絡しづらくなって、飲んでしまふんだ。もしも期待に応えられなかったら、と思うだけで、だめなんだ。」

これは、心の病かもしれない、と思ひ、私と母はやがてじよじよにだが公にする祝い事をとりやめていった。きつとそれは父の深いところにある傷に触れるなかなのだろう。それにしてもよくそれで独立して事業をはじめることができるものだ、と私は思ったが、外で無理すればするだけ、できてしまふほころびがそのポイントだったのだろう。

それでも私と母は、創意工夫をして、意地でも祝ったりした。

誕生日の前夜には父が寝静まってからこっそりと支度をして、プレゼントをテーブルに並べて、音もなく調理をして、夜中の二時に父を叩き起こし、みんなでパジャマを着たまま乾杯をしたこともあった。そういう時、その創意工夫に父は本当に救われたと思う。そして誕生日当日は寝ぼけて会社に行き、普通に帰ってきて、普通の夕食を食べていた。そんなにしてまで、とは思わなかった。それが愛情の示し方であったり、人間の弱さという

なんで、内装が見どころなんだよ、入ろうよ、と私はしつこく誘ったが、母は待っている、と言った。おかしい……と私は思った。その時の母は、家に帰れない話をしている時の父と同じ目をしていた。本当にこの人たちは心の傷をポイントに深く分かちがたく結ばれているのかもしれない、と思った。

私はその小さな建物、ちようどの墓地に立ち並ぶお墓くらいの大ささだった……に入り、いろいろな窓から外を見たり、小さな家具や飾られている絵を見て、楽しんだ。そして、外に出た。母はにこにこして、もとの母に戻って待っていた。

「疲れたから、お茶でも飲みましょう。」

と私は言つて、スパイラルの値段が高いカフェに母を誘った。

一杯のコーヒを嬉しそうに、おいしそうに貴重なもののように飲み終えた後、やはり母は切り出した。母はそういう人だった。曖昧にすることを好まなかった。そして、母はなにかを口に入れる時、いつもそんなふうはこの世の最後に飲み食いするもののように楽しそうにした。私はいつもそれを切なく思った。

「さつき、麥に思ったでしょう？ お母さんのこと。」

母は言った。

「お母さん、箱に入るのがこわいの？昔なにかあったの？」

私は言った。

「今まで言わなかったけれど、あなたのおばあちゃんは、病気になるって、病院に入ったことは知っているわね。おばあちゃんは、自殺したの。精神病院だったから、刃物はなかったのに、えんぴつ削りの刃を取り出して、

合ったのかもしれない、と思うと、たまらなくなるの。お互いのたまらなくつらいところで、向き合っているような気がしてくるのね。そうすると、ふだん積み上げてきた明るいものや、地面に足の着いたものがみんな幻想に思えてきて、ずっと箱の中にいたような気がする。好きだから、大切だから、箱の中に入れてしまっているような気がする。完璧なお父さんになるのがこわいっていう心が、お父さんの中になぜあるのか？ いや、誰の中にもあると思う。それがこわいの。」

「いいじゃん、私がいるじゃん。二人で箱に入っているけど、私はそこに入っていないもの。無駄だよ、来ないもの待っているよ。それより私のために天ぶら揚げてよ。冷えたやつをいやみがましくっておいて、先に寝てしまえばいいじゃない。お父さんもそのほうがいっそやりやすいと思うよ。」

私は言った。

母はにっこり笑って、私のために天ぶらを揚げはじめてくれた。

その夜以来、母は意地で待とうとはしなくなった。もちろん待ちはしたが、少しずつ、先に作って食べているようになった。私は私で、私が生まれる前の息苦しい二人を想像した。愛の熱に苦しむ男女の姿を見た気がした。箱については別の時にわかった。

ある時、私と母は青山に買い物に行き、私の希望でスパイラルピルに展覧会を見に寄った。外国のアーティストが、小さな建物を作って展示していた。見に来た人は、その色とりどりの窓がある小さな建物にかがんで入って、中から外を眺めることができるようになっていた。

入ろう、と私が言うと、母は外で待っていると聞いた。

手首を切ったの。すごく器用な人だったから。」

私はそんなこと知らなかった。失意のうちに死んだというのは知っていたが、それは親戚の誰からも聞かされていなかった。

「お母さんがいくつの時？」

私はたずねた。

「八歳の時よ。」

母は淡々と聞いた。

「お母さんは、おばあちゃんがおかしくなった時、二人で暮らしていたの。もうおじいちゃんがその家に来ることとはなくなつて、おばあちゃんはお母さんが学校に行くのも恐ろしくなつたみたいだった。ある日、学校から帰ると、おばあちゃんの家の中に、段ボールで小さな家を、って言っても、さっきのあの家くらいの大きなものだったんだけど、とにかくそれを作つて待っていた。窓がくり抜いてあって、中にはおもちゃのテーブルが置いてあって、ろうそくが灯っていたわ。壁紙もきちんと塗つてあって、中は花柄が描いてあった。絵心があったから、とてもかわいらしい美しい紙のおうちだった。おばあちゃんは、お前のために家を建てたからここに住んでほしい、と泣いて頼んだ。私は、そうしてあげようと決めた。」

「ええ？」

「それから二週間、その家の中で私は暮らしたの。徹底的に、その中だけで。一步も出なかった。おばあちゃんはおまるまで持ち込んで清潔を保つて世話してくれたし、食事もまめに運んでくれた。陽の光は部屋の窓から、

その小さな家の窓にも射し込んできたわ。」

「お母さん、すごい根性だね。」

「それしかしてあげられることがなかったんだもの。お母さんの世話をしている時、おばあちゃんは本当に幸せそうだった。ここにこしていた。神々しかった。おじいちゃんが去ってから、ずっと泣いていたおばあちゃんを、喜ばせるにはそれしかなかったの。だって、お母さんにとっては、あんたのおじいちゃんは、たまにしか来ないよく知らない人だったから、おばあちゃんがすべてだったのね。」

「はあ……。」

「私が学校に行かなかったから、教師が様子を見に来て、私は保護され、おばあちゃんは病院に行った。後はあなたも知っているとおおり、お母さんはおばさんのところに引き取られて育ったのよ。」

「それって、言葉につくせない体験だったんだらうね。」

私は言った。母はうなずいた。

「今も、時々あの家の中で目覚める夢を見ることがある。体を丸めて、がさがさした段ボールの感触を感じて、小さな窓から細く陽が入ってきて、おばあちゃんの、私のお母さんが描いた紫の花柄を照らし、絵の具の匂いがして、それから、お味噌汁の匂い。おばあちゃんの立てる紫しそうな、活気のある物音。おじいちゃんが来るのを待っていた時のようだった。そして、私はそこから、出ようとしても出ることができない。出てしまつて、金切り声でおばあちゃんが泣くのがこわかった。私はその中で一日中、じっとしている。体を丸めて、じっと……。今日はお出ることができると思いつきながら目覚めて、そして、ここを出る時はおばあちゃんと別れる

時だつて、どこかで知っていたわ。行き場がない気持ちだった。そつと出て、パリのおじいちゃんに電話しよう、と思つたこともあった。でもそれは、自分からおばあちゃんと別れることになる、つてお母さんは思つたの。死んでもいい、とことんつきあつてやる、と決めたの。」

「そう……。」

母の性格の秘密を私はその時知つた。母の一部は今もその家の中にいるんだろうということも。

「だから、お父さんが帰ってこない時、お母さんの世界はあそこに帰って行ってしまふことがある。この時間は永遠に続くという気がしてしまう。愛されているからわざとその時間の中に閉じ込められているというのはわかるけれど、苦しくてたまらなくなる。」

「お父さんにそのこと話した？」

私はたずねた。

「話さないわ。」

母は笑つた。

「話したくないのよ。」

「どうして？」

「弱味を知られたくないの、なんてね。」

母は言った。母はこうと決めたらなんとしてでもやる人だった。結婚前に、そのことをなかつたことにしたのだから、と私は思つた。死ぬまで、母はそれを父に言わなかつた。

そんなことを考えている間にも、午後の光は夕暮れの金色に向かつて、ゆっくりと熟していった。

私は木の下で、大きな葉をじっと見上げていた。木漏れ日が足元でおどり、美しいまだらを作っていた。何組もの恋人たちが腕を組んで通っていた。何匹かの犬が私のところにやってくるまで去っていった。

外国にいることを忘れてしまいうくらい、静かな時間だった。

塔のてっぺんの十字架が陽を受けて光っていた。

もう少ししたら、ホテルに戻って父の買ったギターをほめてあげよう、演奏も聴いてあげよう。そして……。

私は今夜食事をしている時、母の過去を父に話すだろうか？

と私は考えた。

やめよう、父が悲しんで後悔するだけだ、と私は思った。自分の中の小さな闇が、母の中の闇に呼応して苦しみ合ったことや愛し合ったことを悔いるだけだろう。

私にとつてのそれはなんだろう？ 期待されると帰宅できない性分でもなく、箱がこわいわけでもない。でも、私の中からいつかそれは姿を現すだろう、と私は思った。それが成長していくということだ。私はそれとどう向き合うのだろうか？ どう対処するのだろうか？ 私はまだ若く、恐れを知らない。楽しみですらあった。見てみたいと思った。外から見たら大甘の平和すぎるほど平和だった私の家族の中に小さな深い闇があり、その闇はこの墓地にある静けさと同じくらい、歴史を秘めて豊潤なものだった。それは恥じるべきことではない。

陽にきらきら光る葉に守られて、いつまでも私はそのことを考えていた。

A Small of Darkness

by Banana Yoshimoto

Translation by Amanda Gersten

I tagged along with my dad, who runs an import business, on a job in Buenos Aires, but because I had no idea what to expect, I just felt completely lost. There were nothing but white people in the city, the stores and houses lining the streets looked so excessively European, and the Jacaranda trees, stretching out their branches in the characteristic South American sky, which was profoundly deep and blue-to-the-point-of-melancholy in spite of all that, were, too, fresh and unfamiliar.

The girls in the city all looked strangely old, and 21-year-old me probably looked just like a middle-schooler. I even walked alone without getting hit on, and didn't encounter any pickpockets. It was probably a good thing I was wearing jeans so old they would have gotten me kicked out of the hotel restaurant, and an even older "Slam Dunk" T-shirt I had won as a prize in a contest. If I slipped on my jean jacket too, I looked every inch the poor traveler. On top of that, since my dad had told me I couldn't be too careful if I was walking alone, I walked around empty-handed.

That day, my dad went off on his own in a rush to go buy a guitar. His hobby was classical guitar, and his playing was at a professional level. My dad had come to this country not to sight-see, or, to tell the truth, for a business trip, but simply just to come and buy a guitar. The job of settling the transaction had been completed the day before, and since the morning my dad had been giddy, his mind filled with thoughts of the guitar shop even during breakfast. When we got there, I entered the small shop with him and looked at the truly beautiful guitars lined up on display. These instruments, made by hand and polished with love and care, with the brilliance of their existence deepened by the knowledge that soon someone would pick them up and play them... Their beauty

had a purpose. Eyes shining, again and again he took them in his hands and played them one by one, sighing because he couldn't decide. They were all too wonderful, and it was a situation in which he really couldn't choose. He'll definitely be here all day, I thought, and deciding that we would meet later at the hotel, I left the shop.

Having prepared myself by seeing the Madonna film before coming to Buenos Aires, I thought I should try and see Evita's grave, too, so I took the Colectivo, heading toward the cemetery in the Recoleta district. The cemetery had so much greenery you might think it was a park. Lots of people were walking their dogs. There was also someone walking dozens of dogs all at once. That must be some kind of job. There was a cathedral in the cemetery, with a high steeple that rose into the sky. I went into the cemetery.

It was lined with strangely grand and imposing structures, completely different from the sort of cemetery I had had in mind. Each grave was its own building, rising high into the sky—it was almost like a residential area, I thought. On both sides of the wide passageway, there are house-like buildings all lined up in a row, continuing off into the distance. The charnel house big enough for any number of people. A house for the dead, and then another. They were adorned with statues of, among other things, angels and humans and Christ and Mary. There was also a grave attached to a small church, and even a grave fitted with automatic sliding glass doors connected to the charnel house. Inside, there was a beautiful coffin placed on a platform. There was also another grave inside with stairs you could take down to the cellar. Evita's grave was decorated with lots of fresh and beautiful flowers, surely because even now people visit constantly, but compared to the whole cemetery's gorgeous, utterly artful atmosphere, her grave didn't have much of an impact. In the quiet afternoon light, the houses of the dead gone silent.... That atmosphere perfectly recalled the ruins of Pompeii, where I'd gone with my parents long ago. The silence of that city, standing the same as ever though all the people living there had disappeared. The stone streets suffused with the spirit of that time wafting through like a scent. Against the background of the blue sky, the streets forever silent like the dead.

Each of these ornamented structures, lined up in a row in this city of graves, looked big enough to fit fifty of my

mom's gravestone inside. It's true: my mom's gravestone was really small, such a cute and tiny little thing that even finding it in a Japanese graveyard is a challenge.

This is cool. If I was rich, I'd get an amazing grave like this made for my mom, I thought, but the feeling disappeared right away.

Right—because I remembered that my mom would have hated being put in one of those little houses even more. Remembering the dead was strangely natural, being in this place with more dead people than living ones. No matter how many times I turn the corner again and again, this “city of graves,” adorned with what seems like the same beautiful flowers and decorations over and over, continues. In the dark shadows cast by the sun's light, it was like walking in a dream. It feels like if I keep walking around this place forever, I thought, the boundary separating me from the land of the dead will naturally just disappear, and I'll be able to step right in.

Three years ago, my mom died of cancer. Because I was an only child and a mommy's girl, I grieved for an extremely long time, didn't graduate on time, and took longer to graduate than anyone. My kouhai in basketball club were now the same grade as me, but since I had become a peer who was for some reason still called Senpai! by others, “senpai” became my nickname. At graduation, it was really nice, hearing Congratulations, senpai! from my kouhai and my classmates, too. Around that time, the soft and faint remains of my mom's presence had disappeared from the house completely, enabling my stumbling dad and I to begin our free-wheeling new lifestyle. My mom had quietly disappeared from this world.

My mom was the kind of person who somehow just fades into the background, and ever since I was little I thought Mom probably wouldn't live very long. My mom, never revealing her desires or laughing out loud, always seemed to have given up on something. I always figured it was the influence of my dad's mild and muted personality, but my mom had always been this way, or so said all her old friends who came to the funeral. She was that kind of formless, always passive person who doesn't want to do anything in particular.

My mom's mom—in other words, my grandmother—was the lover of a famous artist who lived in Paris. My mom was their illegitimate child. My grandfather lived in Japan

three months out of the year, and apparently during that time, my grandmother was his genchizuma (“local” wife). Since both of them had already died by the time I was born, I never met my grandmother or grandfather, but whenever an exhibition of my grandfather's work came to Japan, I would go and think to myself: “Wow.” We're blood relations, I would marvel. That's what ran through my mind when I looked at those paintings, which frequently featured my favorite turquoise color. There was also a portrait of my grandmother. Her eyes resembled my mom's, so I thought about buying it, but the price was absurd.

When my grandfather started getting on in years, he suddenly got crazed with love and cast out both his legal wife and my grandmother to marry a girl in her twenties. I don't know what happened to his legal wife, but my grandmother became totally deranged. My grandmother had lost everything, and apparently her grief was immense.

It was strange: the only time my mom ever got remotely heated was when she told me that story. I was always anxious that my barely-there mom was going to suddenly just disappear completely, but when she told that story, she was so powerful somehow.

I looked at my watch: it was almost three in the afternoon.

With the sun's rays shining down hard on the graveyard, I walked around slowly, passing by Evita's grave again, and looking at the various inscriptions that decorated it and the glittering pieces in the black granite. Then, I sat down at the base of a really big tree to rest a little. The wind whispered faintly by and dried my sweat. Why is it that graveyards always have trees with low, drooping branches? Are they there to comfort the dead, or do they grow by absorbing their energy?

I wonder if my dad is still choosing a guitar.

My good old dad, my dad who loves classical guitar more than anything else in this world.

After all, my mom and dad came here on their honeymoon. My dad bought a guitar then, too. My mom stayed with him as he shopped and listened patiently as he tried playing them one by one, he told me: And then, your mom pointed at that one guitar, and said, This is your sound, and that's the guitar we have here at home. Your mom had that kind of mysterious quality, and me, I was just completely taken in....

he trailed off, fondly reminiscing.

Basically, my mom got along really well with my dad, but even I could see he had a lot of weird qualities. I know my dad's grandparents well, and it doesn't seem like they're all that strange, so I think these must be his own unique idiosyncrasies. They say he's been like this since he was little.

For example, on my dad's birthday, my mom would be preparing his favorite foods from the morning onwards. My dad always got home early, and would say he would call if it looked like he was going to be late. Knowing this, I would head home right away after club activities were over. But by the time I was a little older and wiser, I understood: on days like that, my dad would always come home late, and drunk. And he wouldn't call. If it was my mom's or my birthday, it was different. Even if he had to leave work early or take a sick day, he'd be at home. But when we were waiting to share a meal with him after he got a promotion, after he branched out from the company, and even after his best friend died in an accident and we planned a get-together to try and give my devastated father some comfort—anytime we tried to do something focused on him—he always just ran away. When we did things like invite relatives or guests, it was even worse. The only outcome, after we would finally eat without him and the guests would leave, was seeing him passed out and carried home.

I wonder just how many times my mom and I lectured him from the time I was a kid up until she died.

And in a sad voice, my dad would say:

"No matter what, when I think of you waiting for me, I just get scared. There's nothing I can do. It feels like I've got leaden feet, and it gets later and later, and harder and harder to call, so I drink. I just think, what if I don't live up to your expectations, and I'm paralyzed."

My mom and I realized this might be some kind of mental illness, and little by little we stopped throwing parties and announcing celebrations. Something in them must have touched a wound in a place deep inside of him. And even with that pain he was still able to do such a good job starting his own business, I thought, but it seems like the more he strained himself on the outside, it got to the point where he came apart at the seams.

Still, my mom and I put our heads together and got creative, determined to celebrate with him at any cost.

Once, after my dad went to sleep on the night before his birthday, my mom and I sneakily got everything ready, lining up the presents on the table and cooking him a meal without a sound, and then woke him up at two in the morning, even toasting to him with the three of us all in our pajamas. I think at times like that, our creativity really saved him. Then, on the day of his birthday, he went to work half-asleep, and came home like normal, and we ate a normal dinner. We never questioned why we had to do it all like this. That was our way of showing him our love—and I thought of it simply as something of our human weakness.

I only heard my mom talk about any of that twice. The first time, I was in elementary school. At that time, my mom and I were still trying to correct my dad's bad habits. It was probably at one of those celebrations, probably the day we were making dinner to celebrate my dad's proposal that we take a trip abroad over summer vacation.

My mom had arranged for tempura, of all things, so we were waiting patiently for him to come home. I couldn't take it anymore, and in any case basically knew that like always he probably wouldn't come, so I made cup noodles in the kitchen and ate that for the time being. I gave my mom some too. Slurping her noodles, she commented, "It could be a lot worse than this, if there was another woman or something like that, huh?"

"Yeah. He's just too serious, so it's no good when we try to do something like this in the house and show how much we appreciate him," I said.

"But, you know, doing all this, preparing, putting the oil in the tempura pot, setting up the ingredients, waiting all this time for this dinner that probably won't happen... it feels just like being stuck in a box."

"Huh," I said. I thought it was an incomprehensible metaphor.

I think this feeling is probably similar to what your dad is feeling out there right now. Sometimes I think maybe that part of us is what attracted us to each other, and I can't take it. It starts to feel like that part of the both of us, the one that feels such unbearable pain, is the one we face each other with. And the everyday bright and sunny things we've piled up together, the things that have finally got their feet on the ground, all start to seem like an illusion, and it feels like I've

always been inside of a box. Like I've been trapped inside of a box because I love him, because he's so precious to me. He's afraid of becoming a perfect father—why does he have those thoughts inside of him? No—I think there's something like that inside of everyone. And that scares me.”

“Don't worry,” I said, “I'm here, aren't I? Even if the two of you are stuck in this box, I'm not. It's useless, waiting for somebody who won't come. Just make the tempura for me instead. We should pick out the cold ones and go to bed before him so he feels bad. I think that way it'd be easier for him too.”

My mom broke into a smile, and started frying the tempura for me.

From that night on, my mom didn't stubbornly wait for him anymore. Of course, she waited, but little by little, she would make the food and start eating. Me being me, I imagined how suffocatingly close the two of them must have been before I was born. It felt like I could see them clearly in my mind: the figures of a man and a woman suffering in the heat of their love.

The other time, I understood about the box.

One day, my mom and I went shopping in Aoyama, and as I had hoped, we stopped to see an exhibition at the Spiral Dome. A foreign artist had made a little building that was on showcase. People who came to see the little building with its colorful windows could stoop down and enter, and look out from within.

When I said, Let's go in, my mom said she would wait outside.

But why, the interior is the whole point, let's go in, I insisted, trying to persuade her, but my mom just said she would wait. Weird....., I thought. In that moment, she had the same expression as my dad when he was telling us why he didn't come home. To a point, I thought, maybe these people truly are tied to one another, deeply and inextricably, by the wounds they hold inside.

I went into that little building...which, now that I think about it, was exactly the size of the graves standing side by side in this cemetery...and had a fun time looking out from the various windows and looking at the tiny furniture and pictures decorating the walls. Then I went outside. My mom was waiting, and she beamed at me, back to her old self.

“I'm exhausted. Let's get something to drink, even if

it's just tea,” I said, and ushered my mom into the Spiral Dome's expensive café.

As I expected, after my mom finished her cup of coffee, drinking it happily as if it was an amazingly appetizing and precious thing, she broached the subject. My mom was that kind of person. She didn't like making things ambiguous. And, when she put something in her mouth, she always savored it as if it was the last thing she would ever eat or drink in this world. That always hurt.

“You probably thought that was strange just now,” my mom said, “What I did earlier?”

“Mom, are you scared of going inside boxes? Did something bad happen a long time ago?” I asked.

“I haven't told you about this up until now, but you know that your grandma got sick, and she had to go to the hospital, right? Your grandma, she killed herself. Since it was a mental hospital, there weren't any sharp objects around, but somehow she removed the blade from a pencil sharpener and slit her wrists. She was a tremendously dexterous person.”

I hadn't known anything like that. I knew that she had died broken-hearted, but I had never heard any of this from any of my relatives.

“How old were you?” I asked.

“I was eight,” she said, casually.

“When your grandma went crazy, it was just the two of us living together. Your grandpa had already stopped coming to the house, and it seemed like your grandma was even terrified of me going to school. One day, when I came home from school, inside the house, your grandma had built a little—even as I say that I'm realizing the thing was about as big as that house just now, but anyway—a little house made of cardboard, and she was waiting for me inside of it. Windows had been hollowed out, and my table of toys had been placed inside, and there was a candle burning. It had even been wallpapered precisely and painted with a floral pattern. Since she was an artist at heart, it really was a charming, beautiful cardboard house. And your grandmother cried, begging me to live in it, saying she had built this house for me. And I decided I would do that for her.”

“Really?”

“Yeah. I lived in that little house for two weeks straight. Only inside of it, not going anywhere else. I didn't

take a single step outside. Your grandma took care of me, even bringing in a potty, keeping the place clean and faithfully bringing me meals. And the sunlight coming in from the room's windows shone into the windows of that little house, too."

"Mom...it's amazing you could withstand all that."

"Because that was the one thing, the only thing I could do for her. When your grandma was taking care of me, she seemed so happy, truly happy. She was like an angel, smiling down on me. That was the only thing I could do to make her happy. After my father left, she was always crying. But, since your grandpa only came once in a while and I didn't really know him, your grandma was everything to me, you know."

"I bet..."

"Because I hadn't been going to school, my teacher came by to scope out the situation, and I was put under child protection, and your grandma went off to the hospital. After that, as you know, I was taken in by my aunt and she raised me."

"The whole experience must have been beyond words," I said. My mom nodded.

"Even now, I sometimes have dreams where I wake up inside that little house. My body curled up on the floor, feeling the sensation of the rough cardboard, and the faint sunlight making its way in through the little windows, shining on the purple floral pattern your grandma, my mom, had painted, and I can smell the paint, and then, the smell of miso soup. And the cheerful, lively sound of your grandma. It was like back when we would be waiting for your grandpa to come. And I couldn't leave even if I tried. I was scared of your grandmother shrieking and crying if I did. So I stayed inside there, completely still, every day, all day long. Curled up on the floor, completely still.... I would wake up wondering if today would be the day I could finally leave, and somewhere I knew the moment I left here would be the moment I would be separated from your grandma. It felt like I had nowhere to go. I even thought of leaving secretly and calling your grandpa in Paris. But I knew doing that would lead to your grandma being taken away from me. I decided I didn't care if I died, as long as we could be together til the end."

"Wow..."

In that moment, I understood the mystery of my

mom's personality. And I understood that a part of my mom was probably still inside that house even now.

"So, when your dad doesn't come home, sometimes it feels like my entire reality has gone back to that place. It feels like that time will continue on forever. Even though I know I'm being trapped in that time purposefully, that it's because I'm loved, the pain just gets to be unbearable."

"Have you told Dad about this?" I asked.

"I haven't told him." My mom laughed. "I really don't want to."

"Why?"

"I don't want him to see my weaknesses," she said. "Just kidding."

My mom was the kind of person who, when she decided to do something, would stick to it no matter what. I think, before she and my dad got married, she must have decided to pretend that had never happened. Right up until she died, she didn't tell him about any of it.

While I had been thinking about these things, the afternoon light had slowly been ripening, turning into golden twilight. Under the tree, I was staring up at its huge leaves. The sunshine filtering through the foliage danced at my feet, with a beautiful mottling effect. Countless pairs of lovers were walked past, arm in arm. Some dogs came over to me and then walked away.

It was such a quiet time I could have completely forgotten I was in a foreign country.

The cross at the top of the high steeple reflected back the sun's light.

I'll stay a little longer, and then go back to the hotel and say something nice about the guitar my dad bought, and I'll listen to him play. And then...

Maybe at dinner tonight, I'll talk to him about my mom's past?

I considered it.

I won't do it, I thought, he'll just get sad and feel sorry for all of his mistakes. He would only regret how the small darkness inside of him had recognized the darkness inside of my mother, how the two had suffered and loved one another.

What is mine, I wonder? Nothing keeps me from coming home when I'm being expected, and I'm not particularly afraid of boxes. But, I thought, it's probably going to emerge

someday. That's what it means to grow up. How will I face it? How will I cope? I'm still young, and I'm not afraid. I'm even looking forward to it. I want to see what the future holds, I thought. My family that looked so peaceful it was saccharine from the outside, on the inside had this small deep darkness, a darkness as full of hidden history as the silence in this graveyard. And that's nothing to be ashamed of.

I took my time contemplating it all, protected by the leaves glittering in the sun.

SCENE

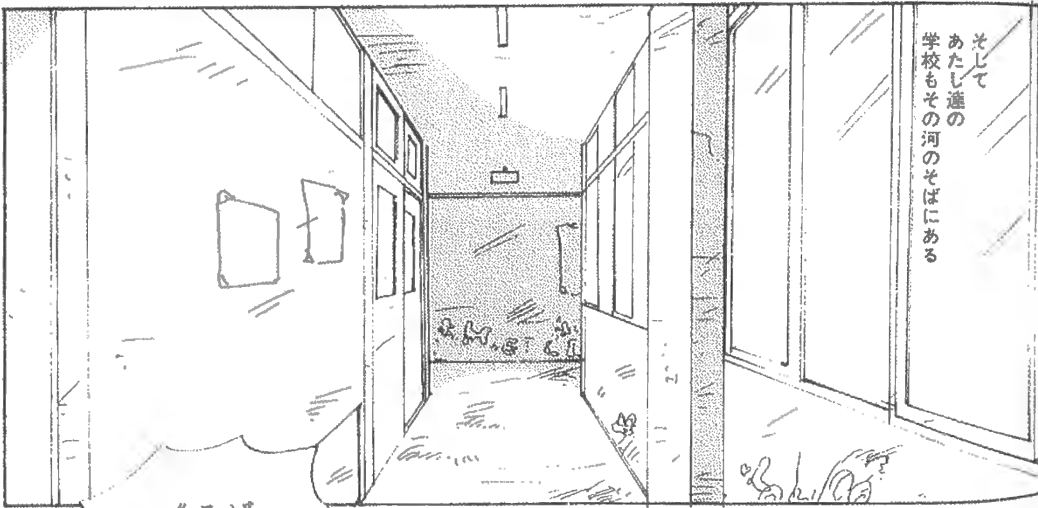
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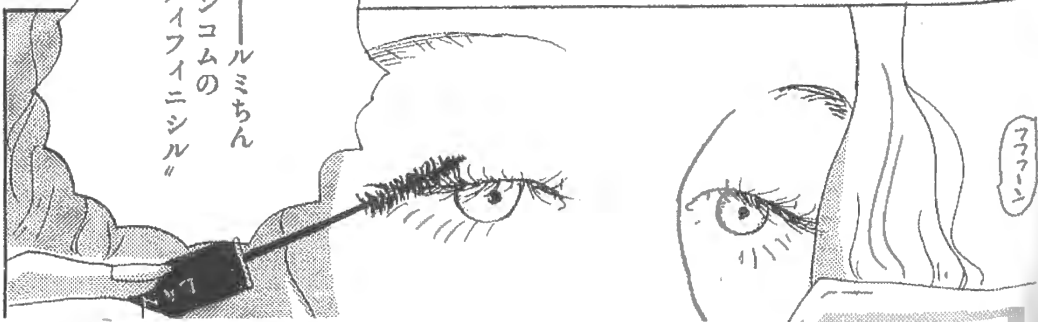
あたし達の住んでいる街には
河が流れていて
それはもう河口にほど近く
広くゆっくりよどみ、臭い

河原のある地上げされたままの場所には
セイタカアワダチソウが
おいしげっついていて
よくネコの死骸が転がっていたりする

そして
あたし達の
学校もその河のそばにある



げールミちゃん
ランコム
の
「デイファイニシル」



マフリン



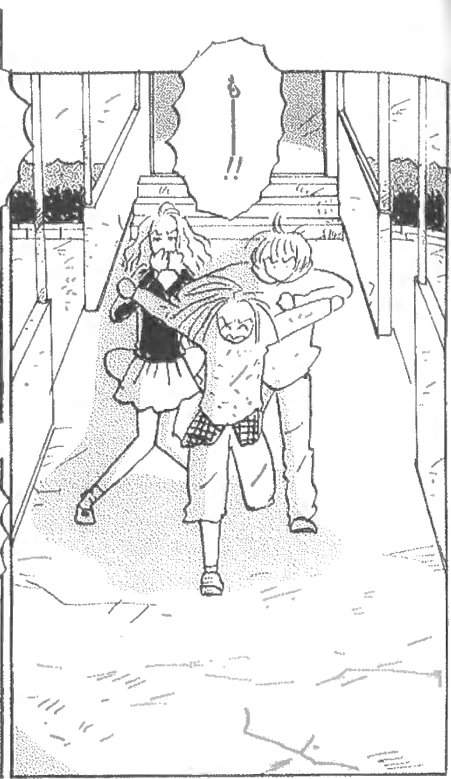
先生にいいつけるわよ。

いーかげんにしなさいよ!! あんた達!!

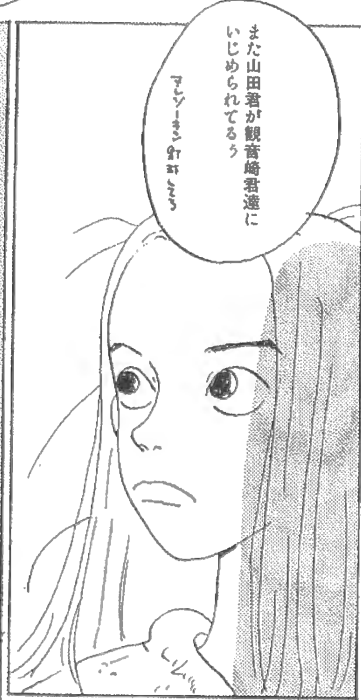
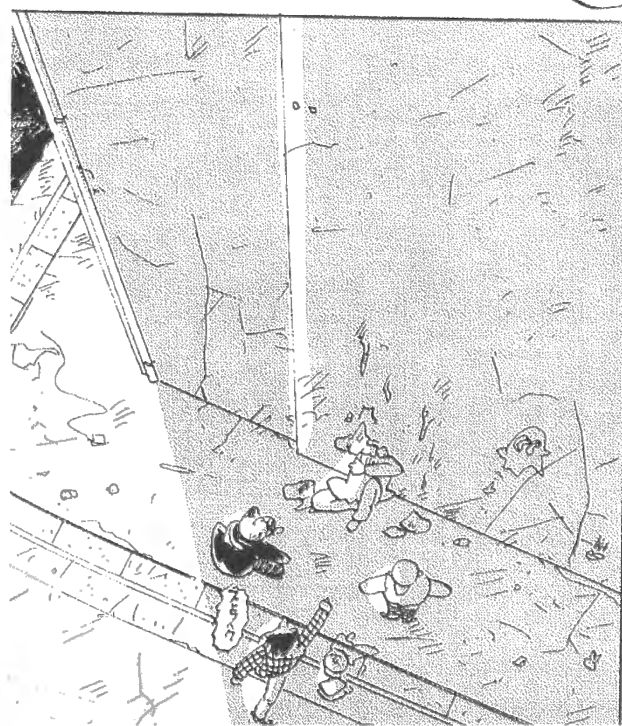


何でもないよな!! 山田!!

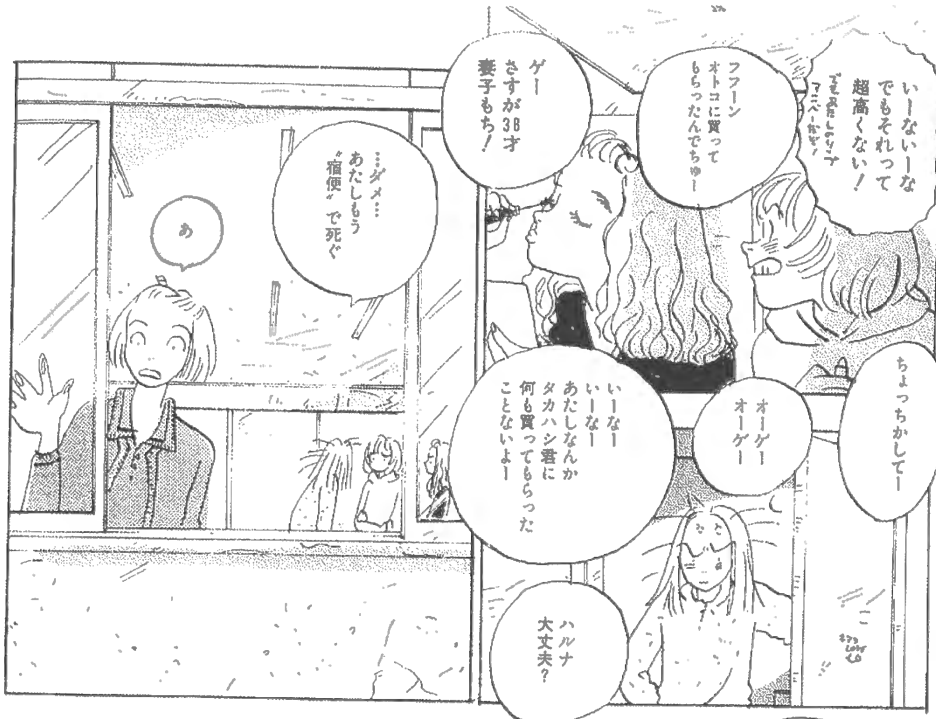
仲良くしてただけだよな!!



も!!



また山田君が観音崎君達に
いじめられてる
Fuyumi-chan



ゲー
さすが38才
妻子もち!

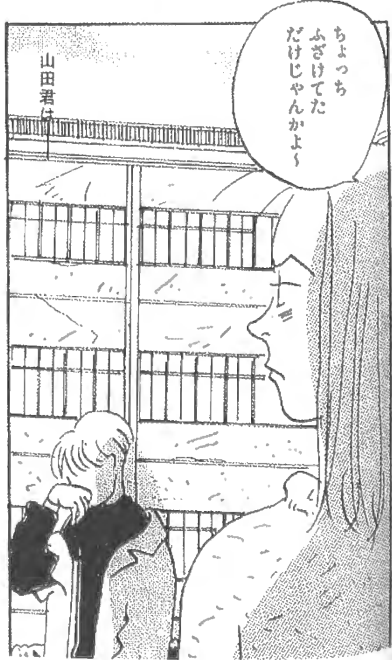
いーないな
でもそれって
超高くない!
Fuyumi-chan

ゲメ...
あたしもう
宿便で死ぬ

いーない
あたしなんか
タカハシ堂に
何も買ってもらった
ことないよ!

ちよっかしてー
オーゲー
オーゲー

ハルナ
大丈夫?



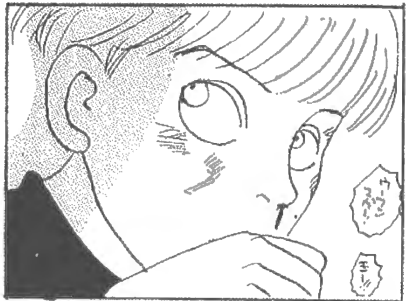
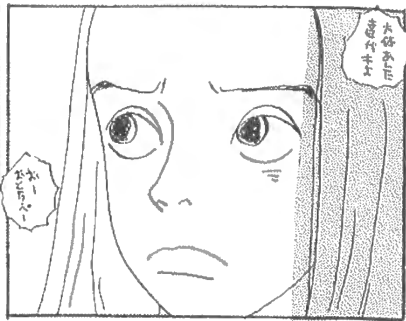
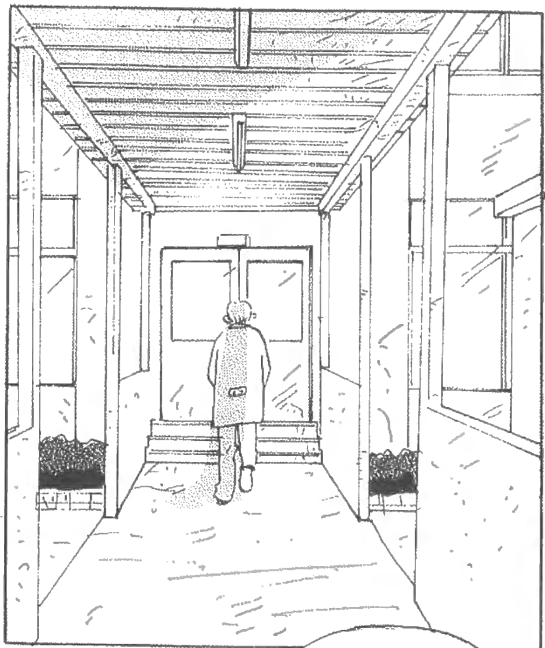
ちよっち
ふざけてた
だけじゃなかよ

山田君は

クラスでは気配を消してるよな
おとなしめで目立たないひっそりとした男の子で
でもオシャレでキレイな顔をしているから
女子にはヒソカに人気があつて

しかし男子には「攻撃誘発性」のマトで
いつもけつこうボコボコにされているのであった





あれ？
一学年下の
吉川こそえとじやないの？
エー？あの
モデルやつてる？

だってタカハン君
言ってたよ
ミロスの帰りワザと
二丁目通ったら
山田君が男の子と
手エつないでたつて

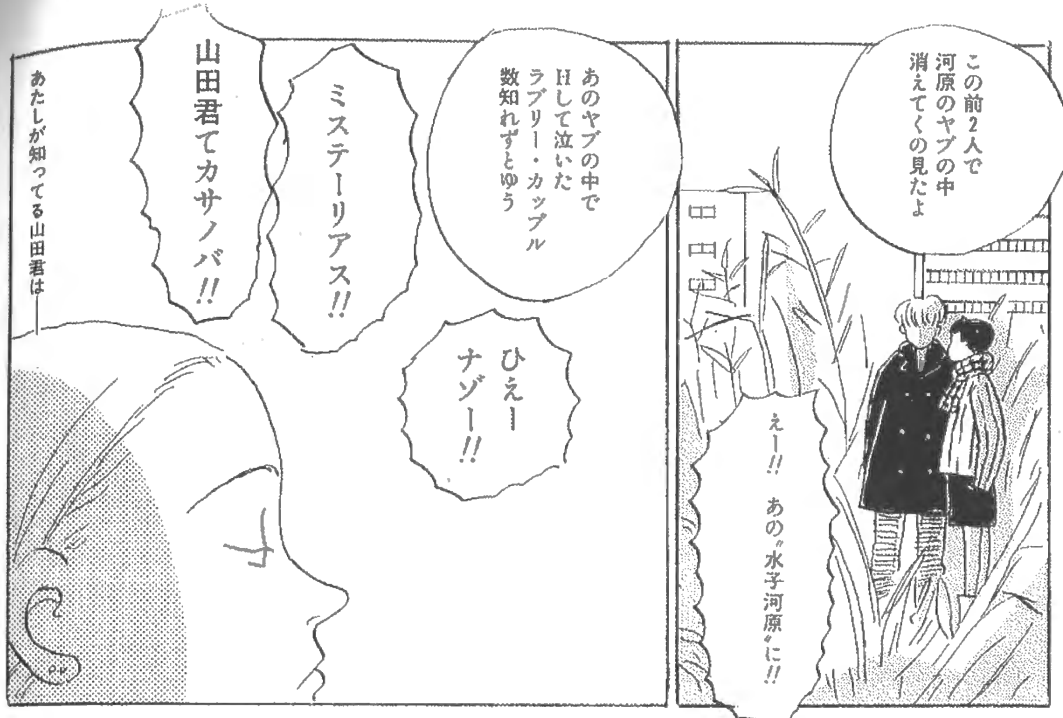
え？
何だそりや？

ねえねえ
山田君で
ホモなのかなー



あたし渋谷のHIVで
一緒にレコード買ったの
みたよー

？B組の田島カンナと
付き合ってたんじゃないの？



この前2人で
河原のヤブの中
消えてくの見たよ

あのヤブの中で
日して泣いた
ラブリー・カンパル
数知れずとゆう

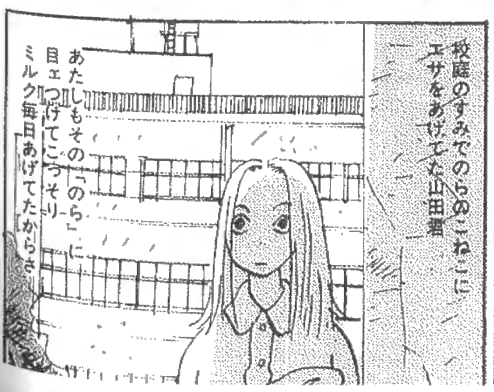
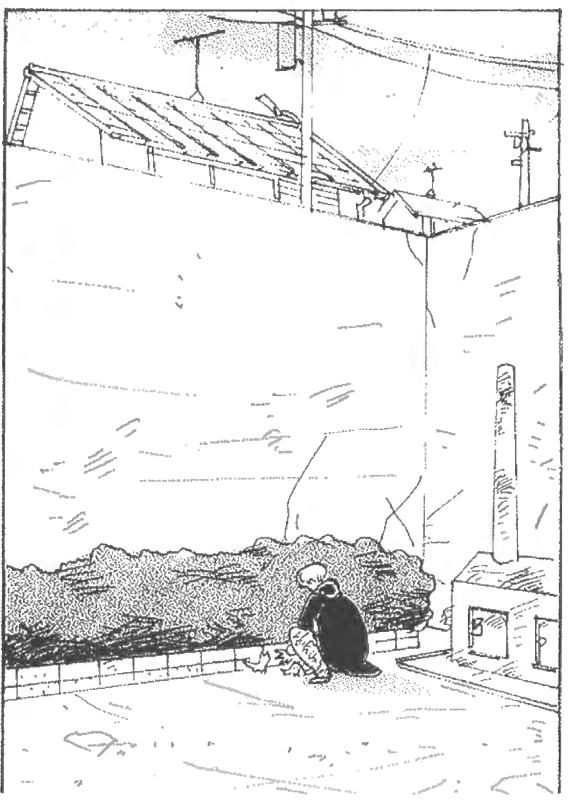
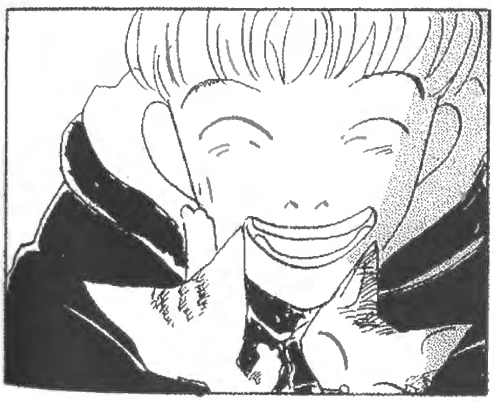
ミステーリアス！！

山田君でカサノバ！！

あたしが知ってる山田君は

ひえー
ナゾー！！

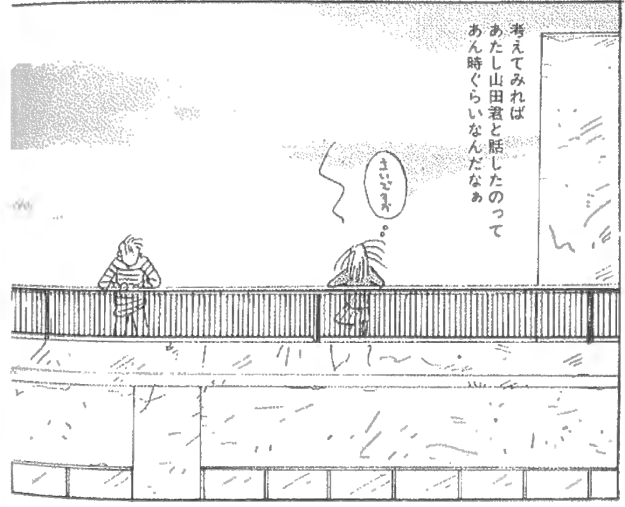
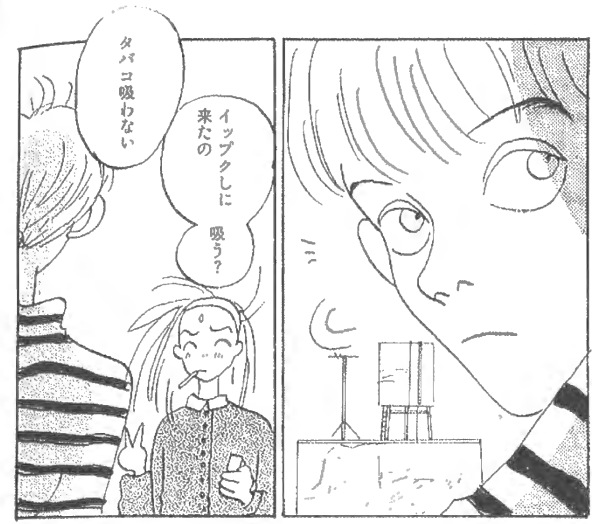
えー！！
あの水子河原に！！



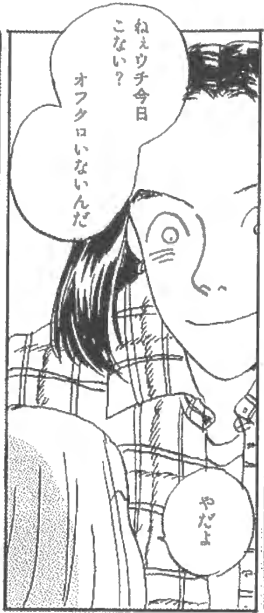
あたしもその「のら」に
目エつけてこそそり
ミルク毎日あげてたからよ

校庭のすみでのらめこやこら
エサをあげてた山田君

あとは放課後のあの時……

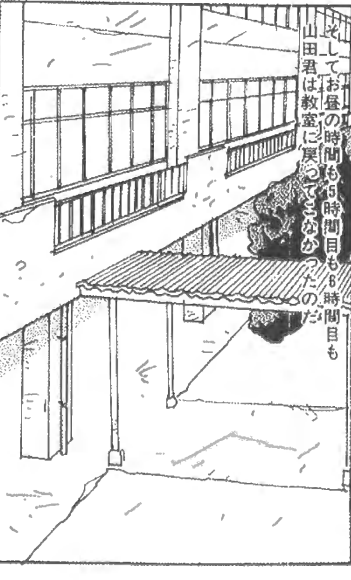
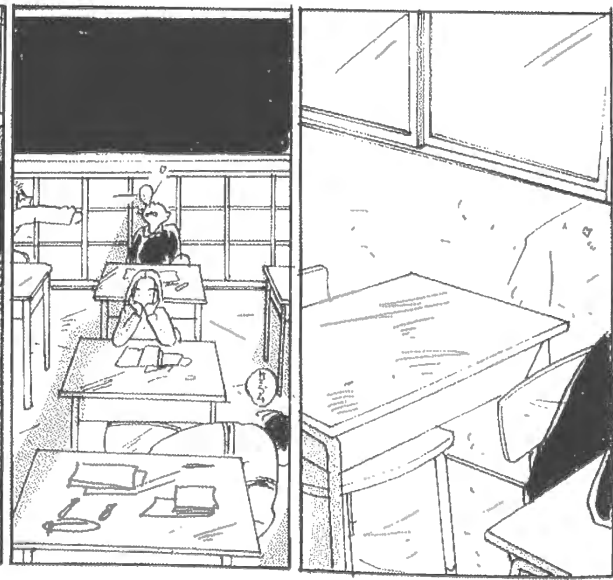


若草アー



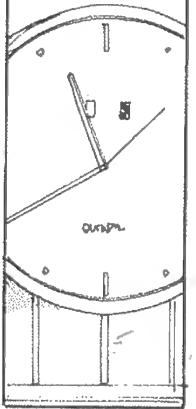
4 時間目の
授業はかったりイ
古文だったんだけど

山田君は席に
いなかった



でも山田君はよく
バックレる人なんでそんな時は気にしなかったんだけど

4...4...4...
4...4...



ハルナ
電話
井上さんから

もしもし？
よっちゃん？

ねえ!! タカハン君から
聞いたんだけど山田君
ガッコのロッカーの中
閉じこめられてんだって!!

HARUNA'S ROOM
NSMAX



4...4...

観音崎君が
入れちゃって
カギかけちゃって!!

ウン!!



そんなん!!

ハルナん家
一番ガッコに近いじゃん
たすけてあげてよ!!

えー、一人でえ？



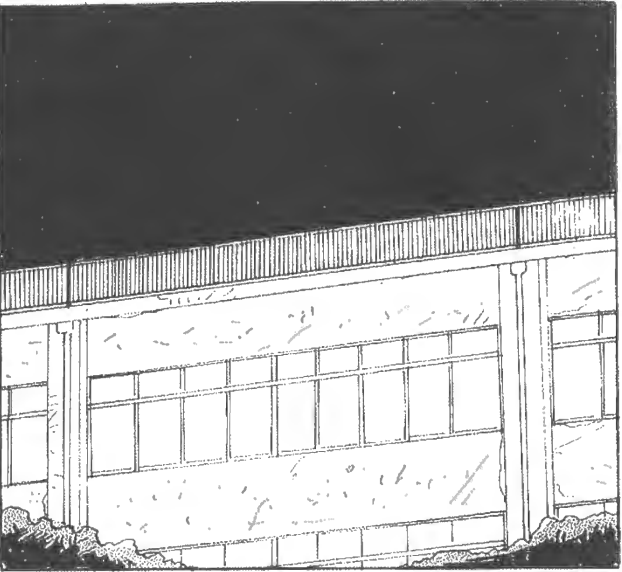
よっちゃん
一緒に行こーよー

ウチの方も
バスも無いし
ガッコまで45分かかるし

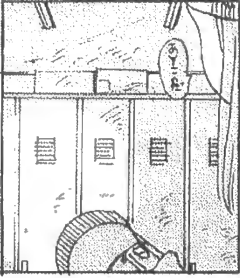


カギの番号
聞いた
えーと
32...

ね？



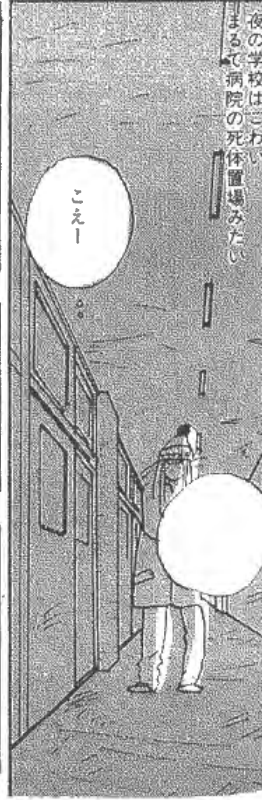
ちくしょう
観音崎
あした
ブッとばしたる



えーと
番号は...

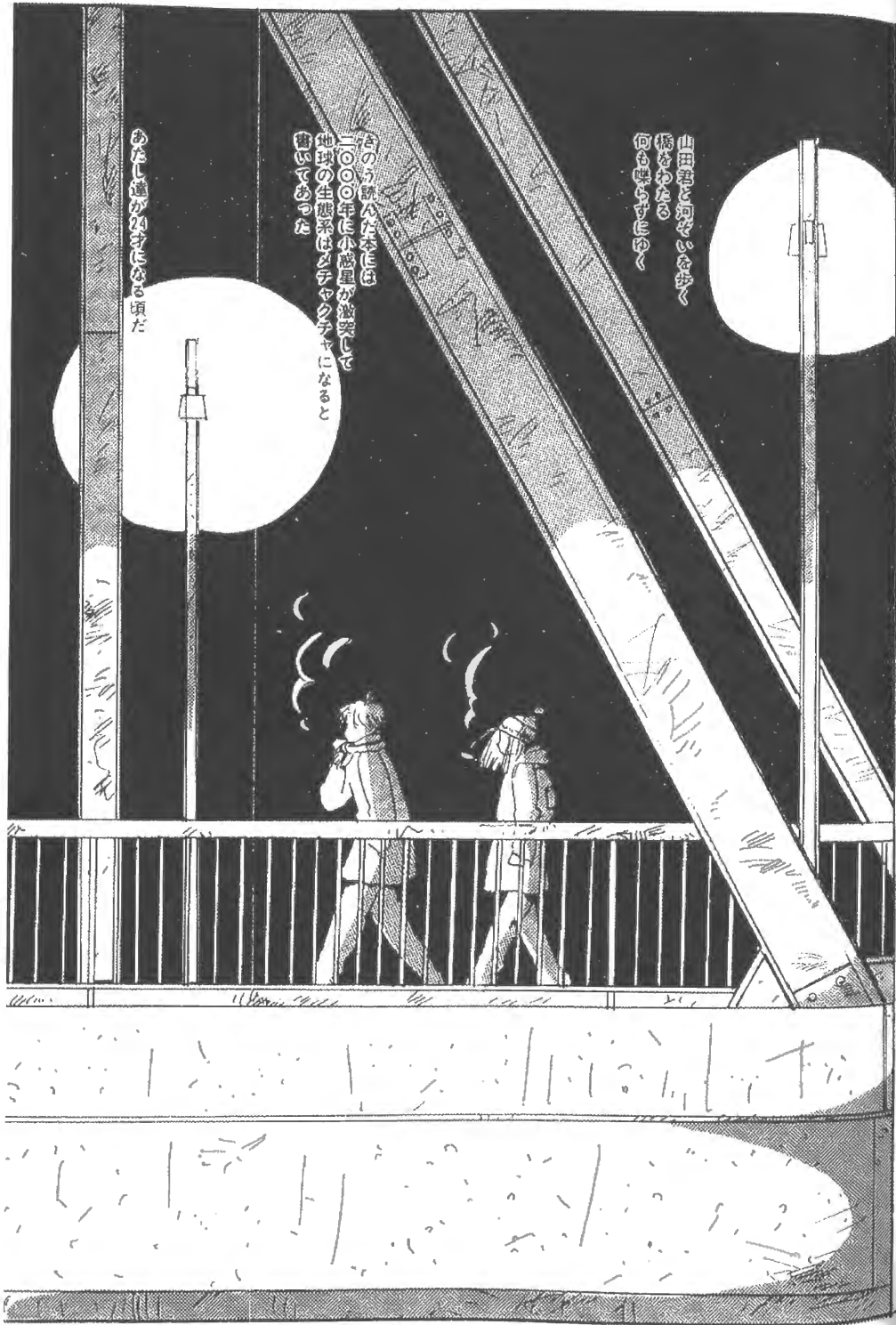


ゴト!



こえー

夜の学校は三つ
まるで病院の死体置場みたい



めなし道がめがけの頂だ

右の車に乗った全乗員
2000年に小笠原島を襲撃して
地球の生態系はメチャクチャになると
言われていた

田中君の足がぶつかる
橋を渡る
向の車に乗る



へんちゃん

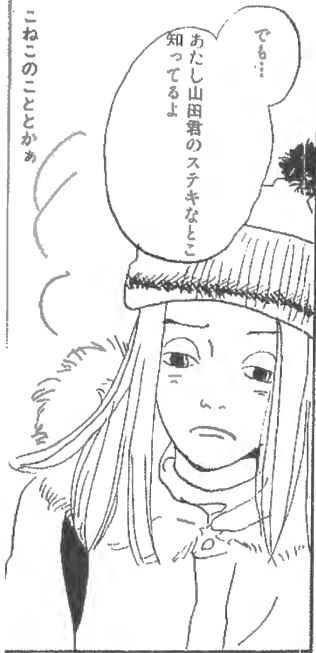
し、死んでる!?

へんちゃん
へんちゃん
へんちゃん
へんちゃん
へんちゃん
へんちゃん
へんちゃん

どうもありがと

トイレ、
トイレ行かせて

足しびれ
ちゃって



でも...
あたし山田君のステキなこと
知ってるよ



ひどいよね
あんなのって

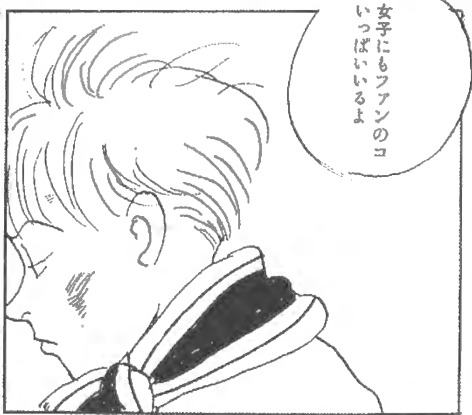
みんなボクのこと嫌いなんだよ
汚ないとかゴミとか思ってるんだよ



あいつら
ボクを出けら
あつかいするやつら

生きたまま
内蔵えぐり出して
皮膚張がえて埋まがして
犬にくわせてやりたいとかさ

くすくす笑ってる
女の子連もいやだ
口に生ゴミつめこんでやりたい

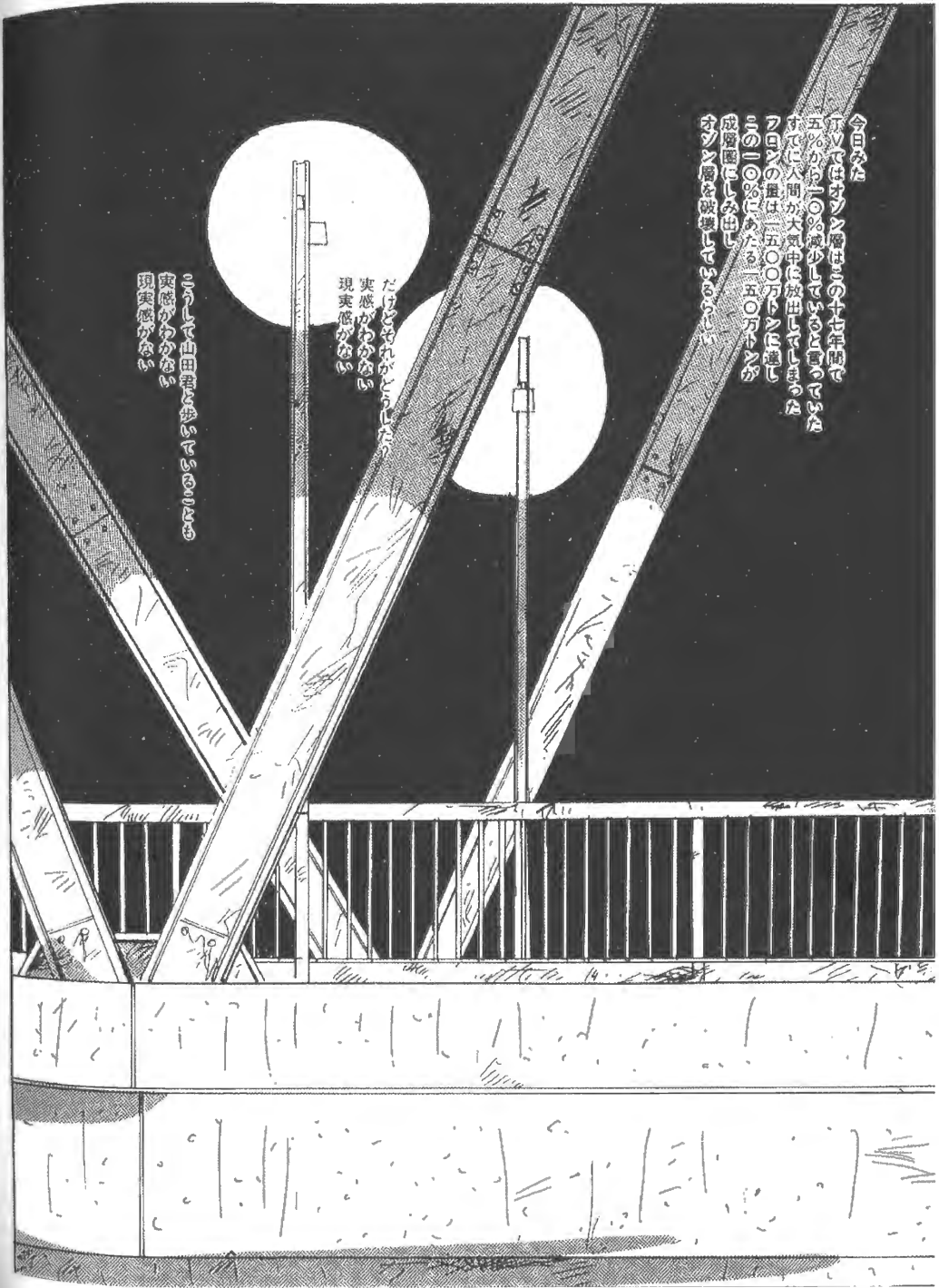


女子にもフアンのロ
いっぱいいるよ



ありがとう
でもボク若草さんが
思っているほど
いいやつじゃないよ

いつもすごく
残酷なこととか
ひきょうなこととか
みだらなことしか
考えてないし



今
あつた
KASHIWA NINGYOJIMEN
HOSOTOSHI SAKURAI
KANEKO KEIJI
NISHIHORI RYUJI
MITSUKAWA HOEI
SHIBUKAWA HOEI
成瀬 園子 (なりせ じゅんこ)

だ
実感
現実感
山田君
山田君
山田君



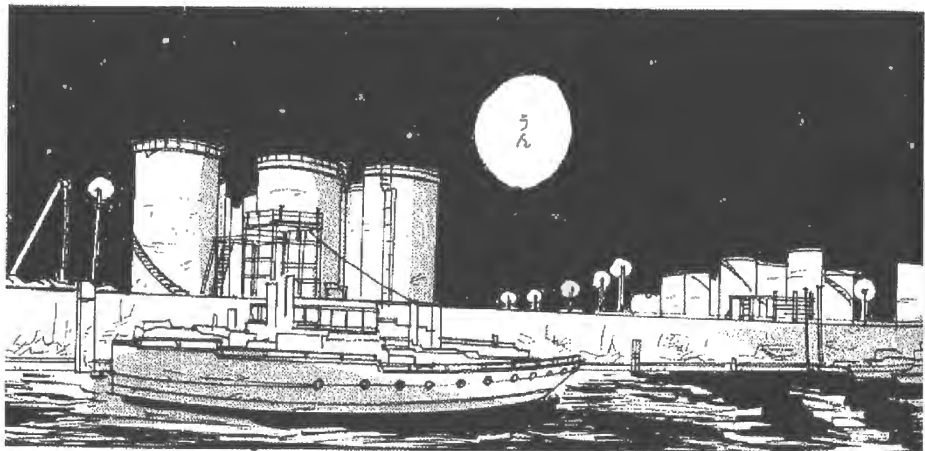
海の匂いがしない？

何かさ
かすかにさ

汽笛の音も
聞こえない？

ねえ若草さん

ハイッ



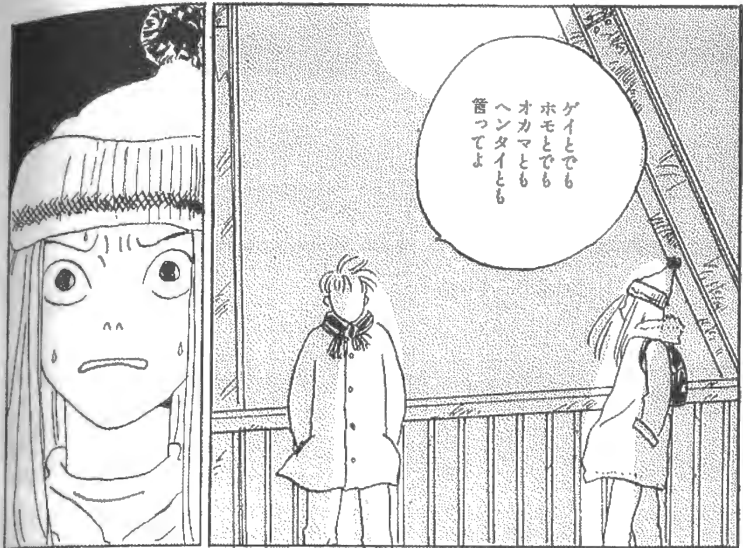
うん

朝がやってきたんだ

疲れと空腹でラリってたのかも知らない
東の空がぼんやり明るくなってきた

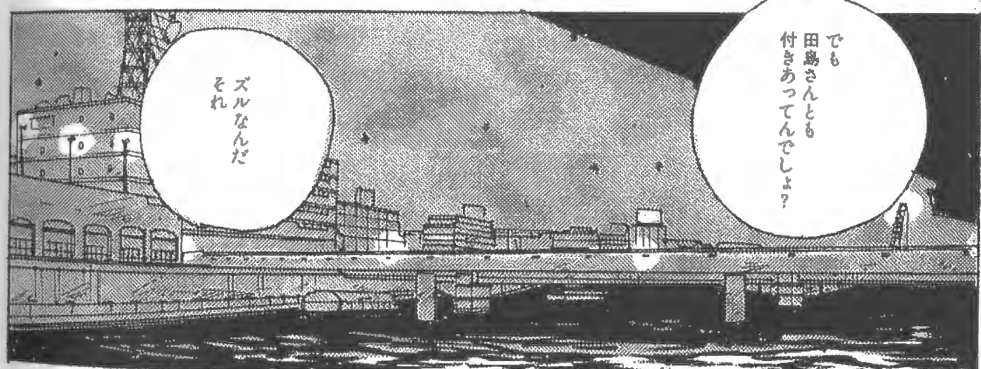
汽笛の音も確かに聞こえた

こつから海はそんなに近くないんだけど
たしかに海の匂いがした



ゲイとでも
ホモとでも
オカマとも
ヘンダイとも
言っつよ

ボク同性愛者なんだ



ズルなんだ
それ

でも
田島さんとも
付きあつてんでしょ？



フツのヒトに自分から
話すのは若草さんが
はじめてだよ



田島さんには
悪いけど
本当悪いけど...



田島さんそれ
知ってるの？

GOLDENRODS GROW ON
THE ABANDONED LAND
BY THE RIVERBANK, WHERE
YOU CAN OFTEN SEE
CAT CORPSES
ROLLING AROUND.

A RIVER FLOWS
THROUGH THE TOWN I LIVE IN.
CLOSE TO THE MOUTH
OF THE RIVER, IT FLOWS
VASTLY, SLOW, STAGNANT,
AND SMELLY.



OUR
SCHOOL IS
ALSO BY THE
SIDE OF THE
RIVER.

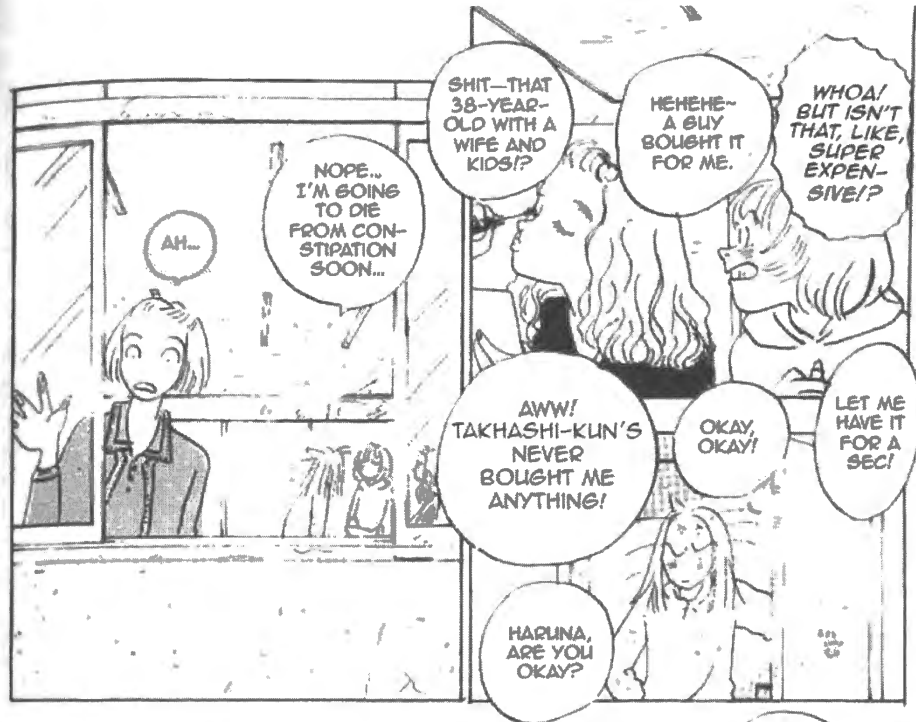
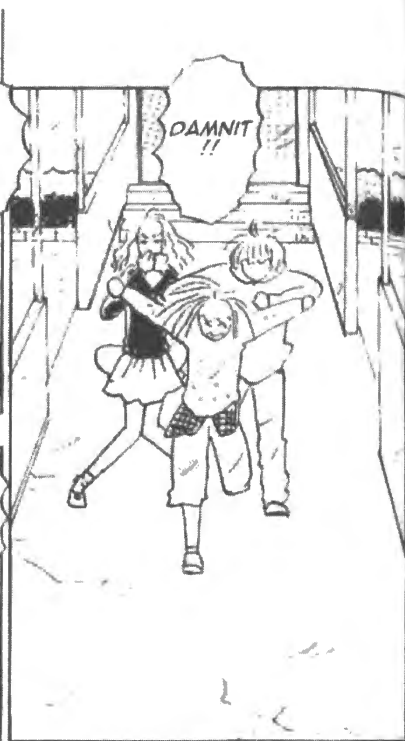
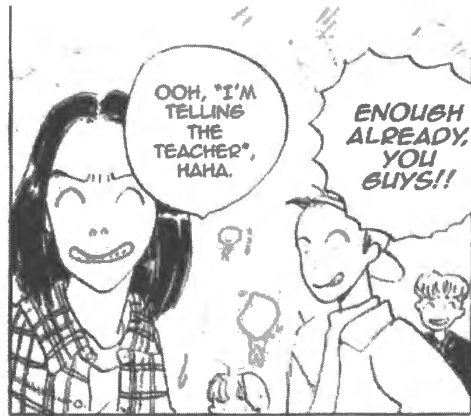


OMG!!
RUMI-CHIN,
THAT'S
LANCÔME'S
"DEFINICILE"!

SCENE 1

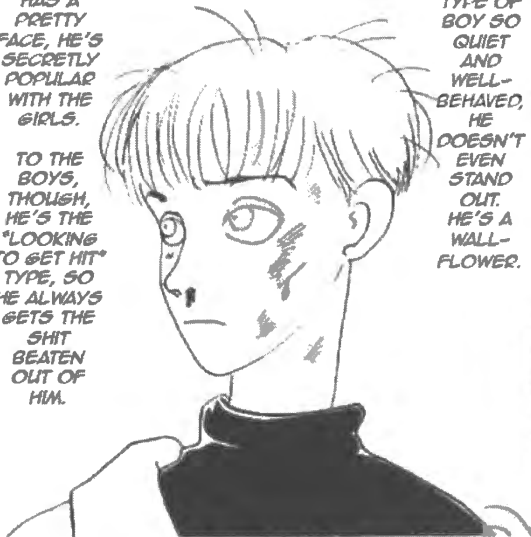
Note:
Japanese Manga is traditionally read right to left, starting in
the upper right hand corner, then continuing towards the left.



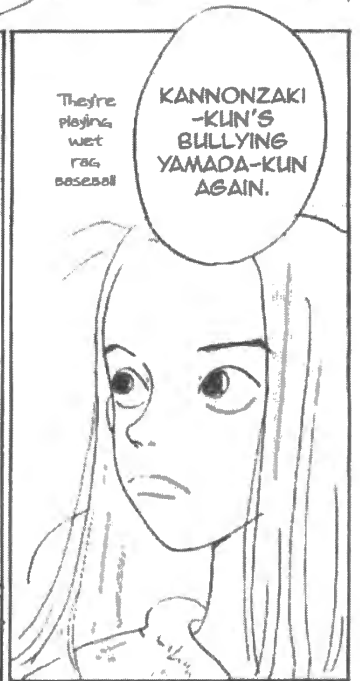
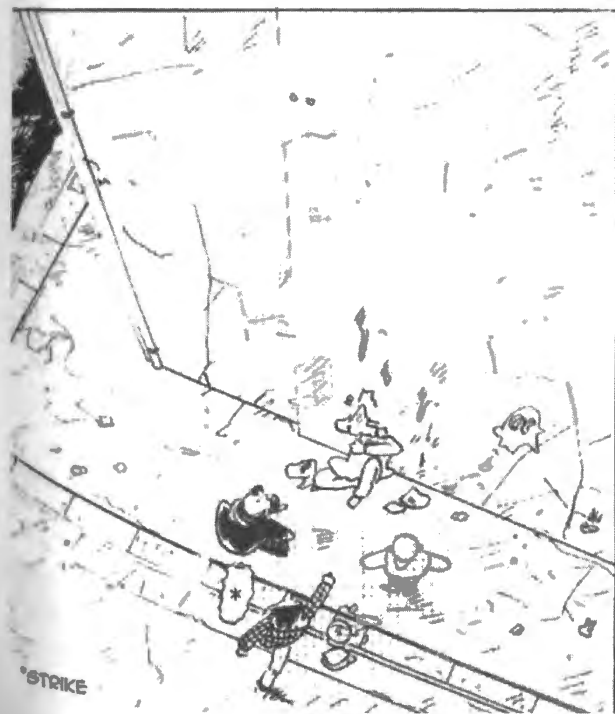


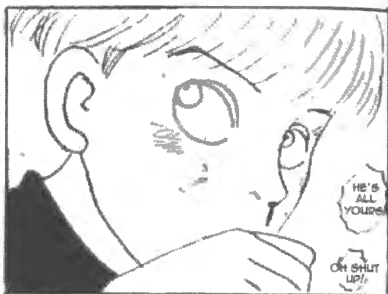
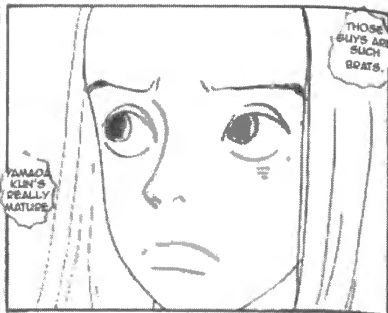
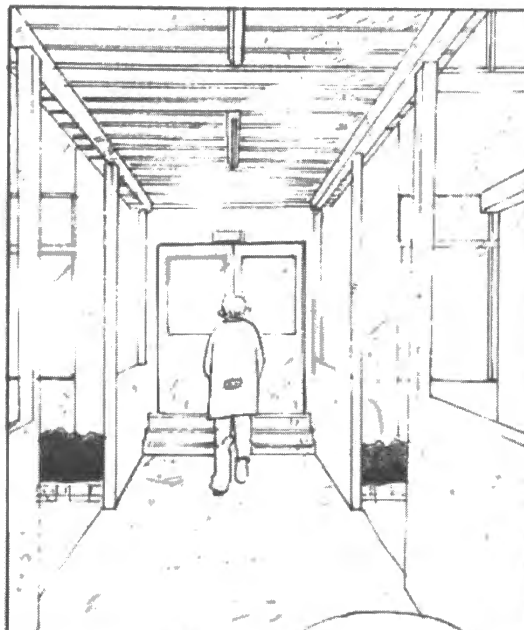
BUT BECAUSE HE'S STYLISH AND HAS A PRETTY FACE, HE'S SECRETLY POPULAR WITH THE GIRLS.

TO THE BOYS, THOUGH, HE'S THE "LOOKING TO GET HIT" TYPE, SO HE ALWAYS GETS THE SHIT BEATEN OUT OF HIM.



IN CLASS, YAMADA IS THE TYPE OF BOY SO QUIET AND WELL-BEHAVED, HE DOESN'T EVEN STAND OUT. HE'S A WALL-FLOWER.





ISN'T SHE LIKE A MODEL OR SOMETHING?

SO HE'S NOT DATING THAT FRESHMAN YOSHIKAWA KOZUE?

BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT TAKAHASHI-KUN SAID! HE WAS MAKING HIS WAY BACK FROM MILOS AND SAW YAMADA HOLDING HANDS WITH SOME GUY ON 2ND STREET!

WHAT? WHY THE HELL DO YOU THINK THAT!?

I WONDER IF YAMADA'S A HOMO.



I SAW THEM BUYING RECORDS TOGETHER AT THE HMV IN SHIBUYA!

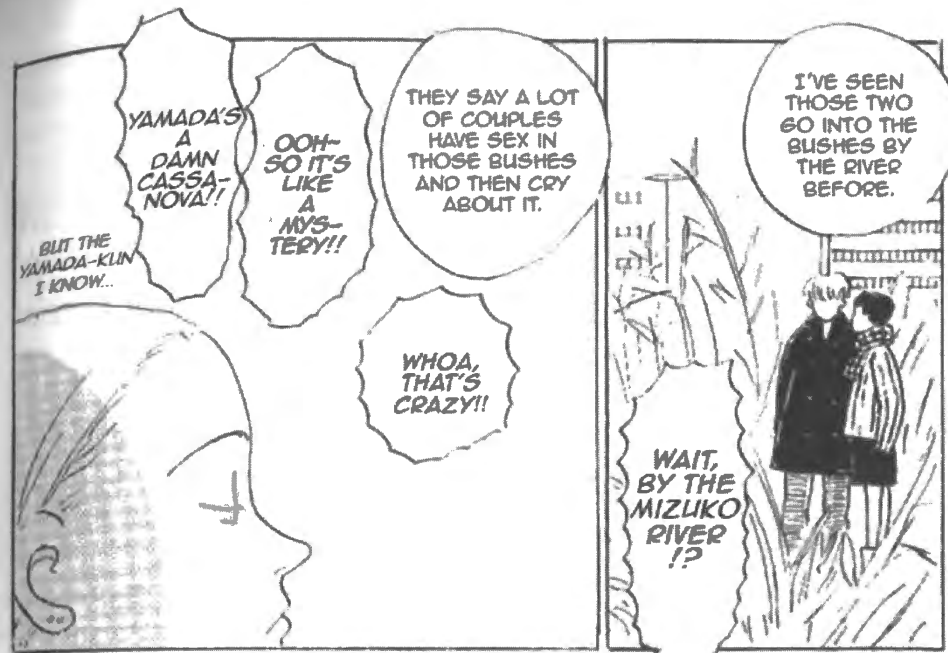
BUT ISN'T HE GOING OUT WITH TAJIMA KANNA FROM CLASS B?



THOSE GUYS ARE SUCH BRATS.

YAMADA-KUN'S REALLY MATURE.

HE'S ALL YOURS! OH SHIT UP!



BUT THE YAMADA-KUN I KNOW...

YAMADA'S A DAMN CASSANOVA!!

OOH-SO IT'S LIKE A MYSTERY!!

THEY SAY A LOT OF COUPLES HAVE SEX IN THOSE BUSHES AND THEN CRY ABOUT IT.

WHOA, THAT'S CRAZY!!

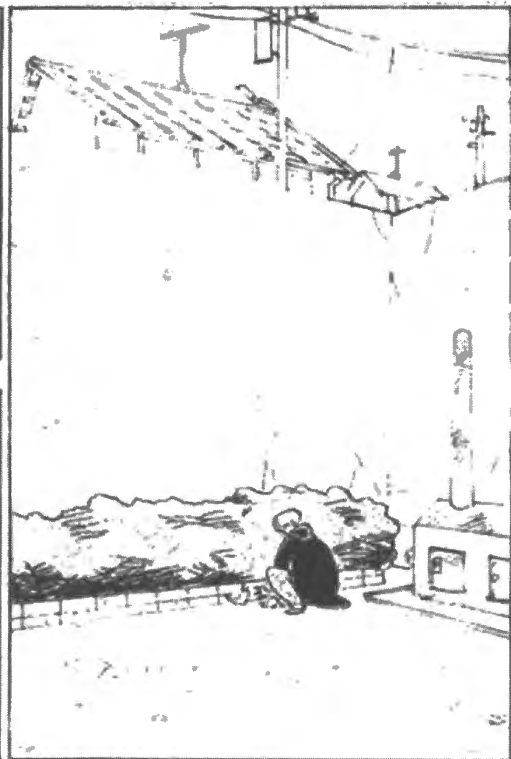
I'VE SEEN THOSE TWO GO INTO THE BUSHES BY THE RIVER BEFORE.

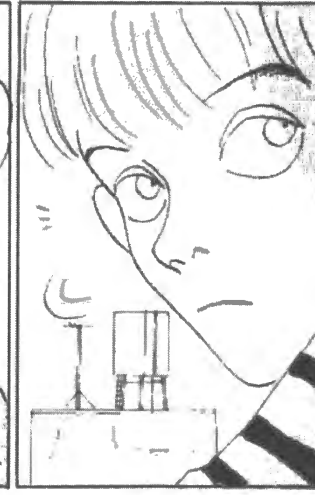
WAIT, BY THE MIZUKO RIVER!?



I WAS ALSO SECRETLY KEEPING AN EYE ON "NORA", GIVING HER MILK EVERY DAY.

...GAVE FOOD TO THE STRAY KITTEN IN THE CORNER OF THE SCHOOL YARD.



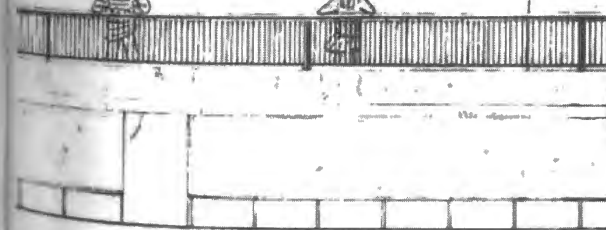
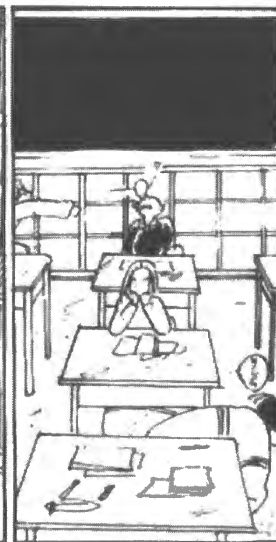


AND AFTER THAT TIME AFTER SCHOOL...

BUT YAMADA-KUN WASN'T THERE.

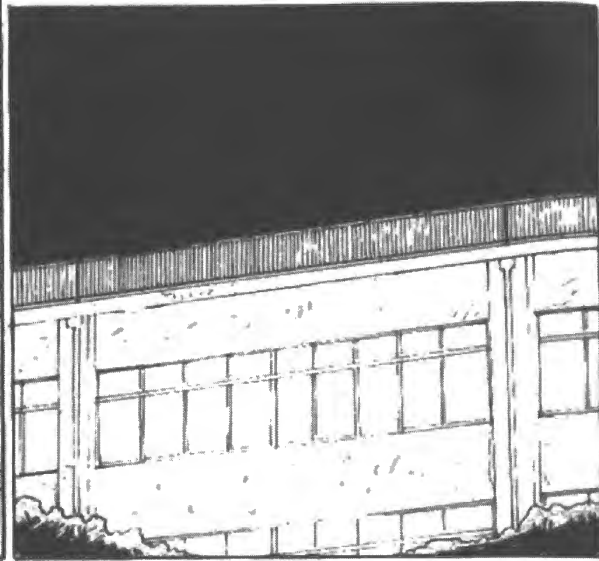
I HAD MY ANNOYING ASS CLASSIC LIT CLASS 4TH PERIOD...

NOW THAT I THINK OF IT, I WOULD SAY THAT'S THE ONLY TIME I ACTUALLY TALKED WITH YAMADA-KUN.





SHIT.
TOMORROW
YOU'RE GOING
DOWN,
KANNONZAKI.



UH...THE
COMBO
IS...



THUD!



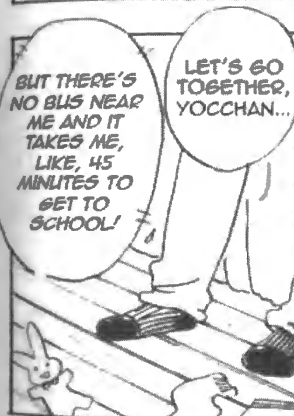
THE SCHOOL
AT NIGHT IS
SCARY.
IT'S LIKE THE
PLACE THEY
STORE DEAD
BODIES
IN AT THE
HOSPITAL.

SCARY...
OH,
THERE
IT IS.



HARUNA,
PHONE FOR
YOU! IT'S
INOUE-SAN.

BUT YAMADA-KUN
SKIPS CLASS
A LOT, SO I DIDN'T
GIVE IT MUCH
THOUGHT
AT THE TIME.



BUT THERE'S
NO BUS NEAR
ME AND IT
TAKES ME,
LIKE, 45
MINUTES TO
GET TO
SCHOOL!

LET'S GO
TOGETHER,
YOCCHAN...

HARUNA,
YOU LIVE
CLOSEST
TO THE
SCHOOL,
RIGHT!?
GO HELP
HIM!

UGH
!!

HEY!!
TAKAHASHI
-KUN
TOLD ME
THAT
YAMADA-KUN
GOT SHUT
INSIDE
HIS OWN
LOCKER!

HELLO?
YOCCHAN?

ME? I DON'T
WANT
TO GO BY
MYSELF!



HERE'S THE
LOCKER
COMBINA-
TION...
UH...3-2...

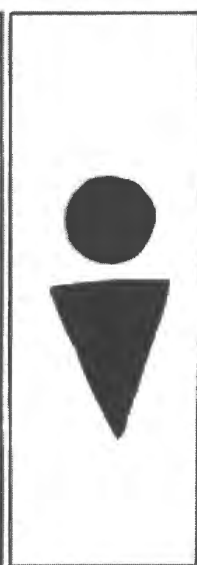
PLEASE?



GET
OUT!!
KANNONZAKI
PUSHED HIM IN
AND LOCKED
IT!!

YAMADA-KUN AND I WALK
ALONGSIDE THE RIVER. WE
CROSS THE BRIDGE
WITHOUT SAYING A WORD.

IN THE BOOK I READ YESTER-
DAY, IT SAID THAT IN THE YEAR
2XXX, AN ASTEROID WILL CRASH
INTO EARTH AND MESS UP THE
ECOSYSTEM.
WE'D BE 24 YEARS OLD BY
THEN.



LIKE THE
STRAY
KITTEN.

BUT...

THERE ARE
A LOT OF
COOL
THINGS
ABOUT YOU,
YAMADA-
KUN.

WELL,
EVERYONE
HATES ME.
THEY THINK
I'M DIRTY,
OR
THAT I'M
GARBAGE.

IT WAS
REALLY
MEAN OF
THEM TO DO
THAT.

SO
I TRY
TALKING
TO
HIM.

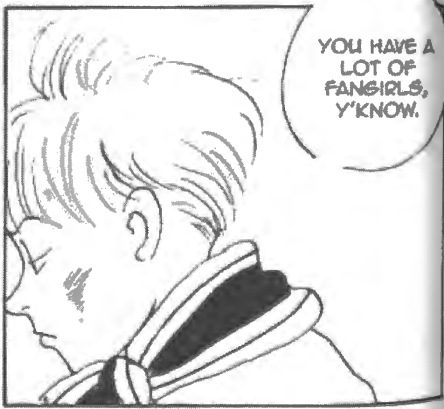


LIKE
THOSE
GLYS
THAT
TREAT ME
LIKE
SOME
KIND OF
PEST.

AND HOW I
WANT TO TEAR
OUT THEIR
ORGANS WHILE
THEY'RE STILL
ALIVE, TURN
THEIR SKIN
INSIDE OUT,
COVER THEM IN
SALT, AND FEED
THEM TO THE
DOGS.

AND I HATE
SIEGLING
GIRLS, TOO.
I WANT TO
STUFF GAR-
BAGE INTO
THEIR
MOUTHS.

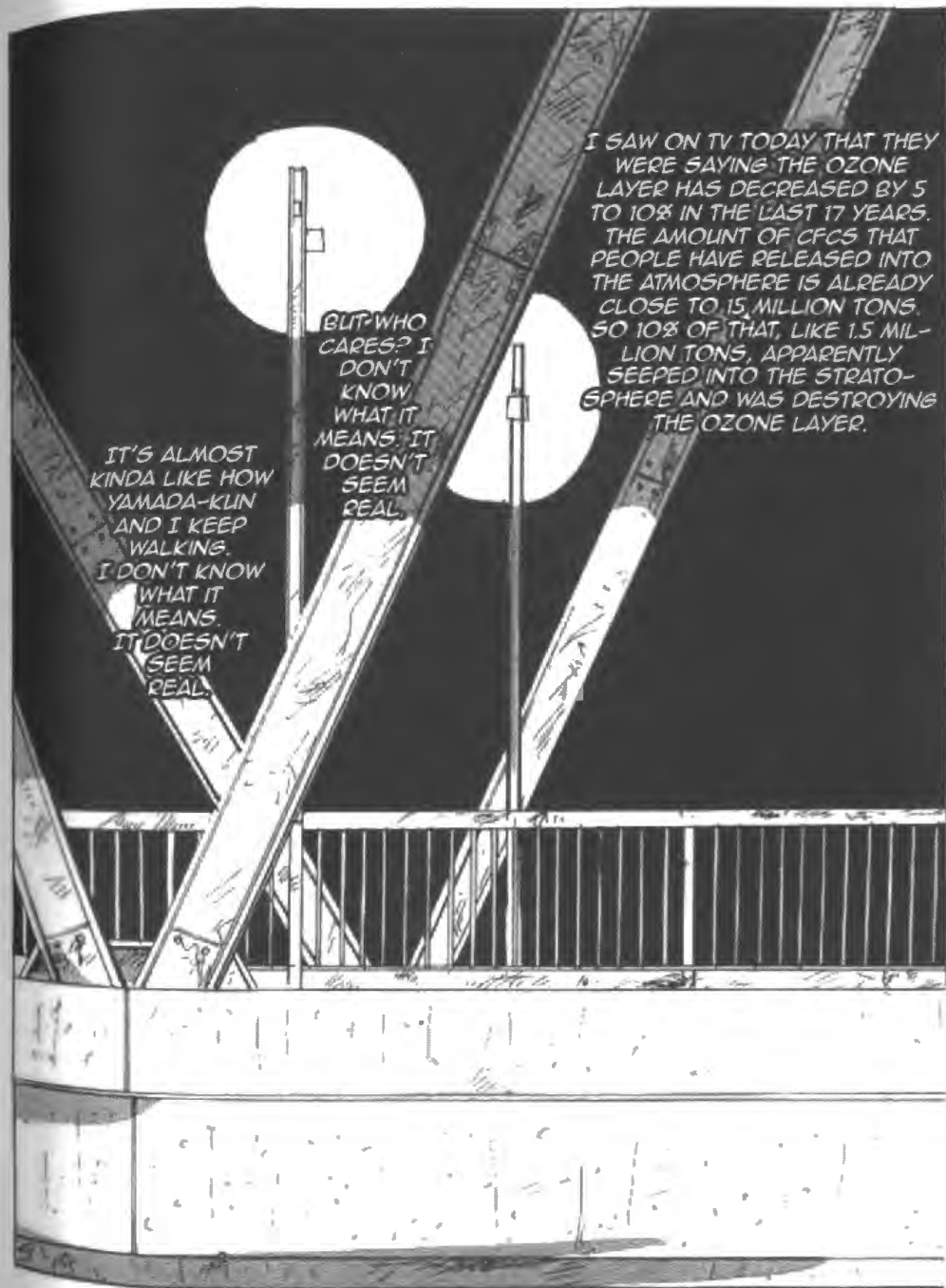
YOU HAVE A
LOT OF
FANGIRLS,
Y'KNOW.



BECAUSE I
ALWAYS THINK
ABOUT CRUEL
THINGS AND
CRUDE
THINGS AND
COWARDLY
THINGS.

THANKS,
BUT I'M NOT
AS GREAT
AS YOU
THINK I AM,
WAKAKUSA
-SAN.

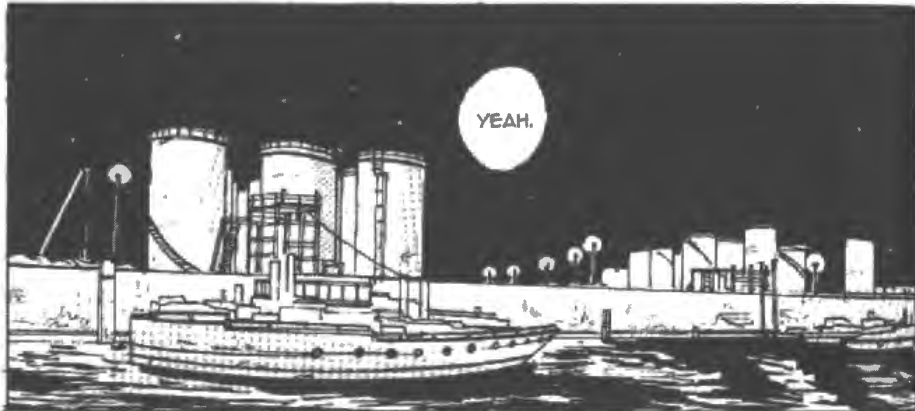
WHAT'D
YOU
MEAN?



I SAW ON TV TODAY THAT THEY
WERE SAYING THE OZONE
LAYER HAS DECREASED BY 5
TO 10% IN THE LAST 17 YEARS.
THE AMOUNT OF CFCs THAT
PEOPLE HAVE RELEASED INTO
THE ATMOSPHERE IS ALREADY
CLOSE TO 15 MILLION TONS.
SO 10% OF THAT, LIKE 1.5 MIL-
LION TONS, APPARENTLY
SEEPED INTO THE STRATO-
SPHERE AND WAS DESTROYING
THE OZONE LAYER.

BUT WHO
CARES? I
DON'T
KNOW
WHAT IT
MEANS. IT
DOESN'T
SEEM
REAL.

IT'S ALMOST
KINDA LIKE HOW
YAMADA-KUN
AND I KEEP
WALKING.
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT
MEANS.
IT DOESN'T
SEEM
REAL.



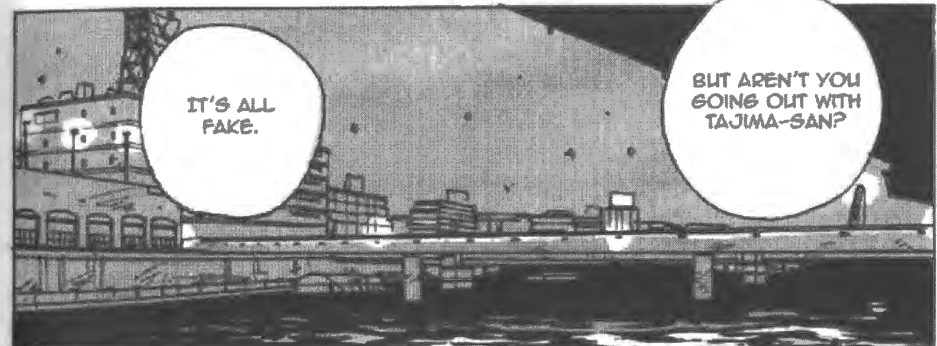
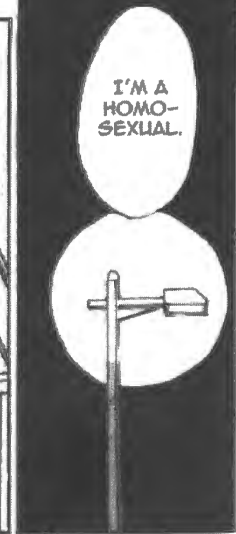
FROM HERE, THE OCEAN ISN'T REALLY CLOSE, BUT I DEFINITELY COULD SMELL IT.

AND I COULD HEAR THE STEAM WHISTLE TOO.

I MAY HAVE BEEN TRIPPING OUT BECAUSE I WAS SO EXHAUSTED AND HUNGRY.

THE EAST SKY GOT A LITTLE BRIGHTER.

MORNING CAME.



Critical

Pieces

Descifrando la ideología de Rosario Ferré a través de la autocensura

Por Lydia Herrick

Rosario Ferré no es fascinante solamente porque sus obras dan que pensar, sino también por su elección de participar en la autotraducción. Nació en 1938 y es trilingüe: habla español, inglés y francés. Debido a su gran don para las lenguas, ella misma tradujo sus obras a otros idiomas. Una de estas obras es el cuento "Amalia," que trata de una niña sin nombre, nacida del incesto, y su muñeca Amalia. Ferré escribió esta obra por primera vez en español en 1976, en el libro *Papeles de Pandora*. 15 años después, en 1991, ella la tradujo al inglés para la colección de traducciones de las historias de *Papeles de Pandora*; la colección se llama *The Youngest Doll*. Las dos versiones del texto son muy distintas y casi no se puede considerarlas como la misma historia; la primera toma un tono muy político hacia los Estados Unidos y la segunda elimina este tono y se enfoca más en el feminismo. El proceso único de Ferré de la autotraducción nos deja con dos textos distintos, los cuales componen la obra total de "Amalia;" la combinación de estos textos y su proceso de traducción revelan su ideología política y el hecho de que la autotraducción es una técnica para acercarse a los lectores: es íntima.

Ferré nació en Ponce, Puerto Rico, en 1938 en una familia acomodada. Su padre era el gobernador de Puerto Rico, así que ella tenía un gran interés en la política, las luchas sociales y el papel que desempeñaba la mujer en la sociedad puertorriqueña. Para ocuparse y distraerse de sus problemas personales, ella asistió a la Universidad de Puerto Rico y después recibió su maestría. Durante su tiempo en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Ferré fundó una revista llamada *Zona carga y descarga*, con la que comenzó su carrera en la escritura. La revista se enfocaba en dar oportunidades a los estudiantes para expresar sus perspectivas políticas y artísticas. *Zona carga y descarga* tuvo mucho éxito, y también los escritores

que contribuyeron en ella ganaron mucha fama y respecto. Después de este comienzo de su carrera, Ferré empezó a escribir mucho más. Escribió novelas, hizo muchas traducciones de sus propias obras y de otras obras, y escribió biografías (incluyendo la de su padre); su éxito en su escritura y activismo fue inmenso.

Luego, después de estudiar inglés, Ferré comenzó a escribir en esta lengua, una decisión que criticaron muchos puertorriqueños. Pero Ferré afirma que: "No soy menos puertorriqueña porque puedo escribir en inglés. ¿Por qué tengo que limitarme a un sólo idioma cuando puedo expresarme en ambos? ¿Por qué he de usar una sola mano cuando tengo dos?" Este sentimiento refleja su flexibilidad e interés en las lenguas y otras culturas en general. Además, revela su ideología sobre el derecho de escribir: revela que es ilógico limitarse a través del proceso de escritura; también el sentimiento está conectado a la idea del papel creativo de la voz de la mujer puertorriqueña. Además, para probar su poder como escritora y como mujer, Ferré demuestra su interés en otras lenguas a través de sus numerosas autotraducciones. Escribió su cuento "Amalia" por primera vez en 1976 y por segunda vez en 1991, cuando ella lo tradujo al inglés. De hecho, "Amalia" es parte del libro *Papeles de Pandora* mientras que la segunda versión, "The Youngest Doll", aparece en el libro del mismo nombre. Esta obra completa (incluyendo las dos versiones) es un ejemplo de la manifestación del amor de Ferré por las lenguas y el poder de expresarse a través de la palabra precisa.

El concepto de la autotraducción es fascinante porque incluye autocensura y restricciones intencionales del texto. El acto de traducir una obra a otra lengua requiere que ella cambie mucho. Sin embargo, cuando es decisión de la autora, con frecuencia incluye mucha autocensura; no está considerado como un intento de mantener el significado del texto original, como ocurriría en una traducción de una obra de otro autor. Según Helena Tanqueiro y Patricia López-Gay, la autotraducción garantiza un "unquestionable literariness of the texts produced, and the study of self-translations can bring to light different procedures and strategies that are applied when undertaking a creative translation" (176). Estas estrategias nos revelan una realización profunda sobre el autor; estos cambios drásticos del lenguaje existen por otra razón que la de dirigirse

más directamente a otra cultura. Ocurre debido a un giro ideológico, político o personal de la autora que se puede descubrir a través de la censura y a través de cambios de versión del texto.

La censura es el aspecto más intrigante de la autotraducción porque revela los cambios ideológicos más drásticos de la autora de una manera indirecta. Además, la censura misma es otra parte del entendimiento de la obra; lo que no está incluido en la segunda versión de un texto es parte del entendimiento de la obra total. La importancia de la autotraducción existe debido a la censura, según Tanqueiro y López-Gay, "self-translation allows us to observe explicit systemic or ideological self-censorship, and to detect other conditioning factors that lead to obvious changes or adaptations of the original text or translation" (182). En este caso, lo que no está en el texto es el aspecto más interesante. Por eso, la cantidad de tiempo que pasa entre las versiones del texto es muy importante: si pasa mucho tiempo, hay una gran oportunidad para el autor de cambiar su ideología. Además, no existiría tanta censura si el texto fuera traducido por otro autor, debido al papel del traductor de recrear con exactitud los aspectos del original. Sabemos que esta censura es muy intencional y también sabemos el público previsto; el lector bilingüe es parte de las dos culturas y puede comprender la ideología del autor. Por eso, las supresiones de una traducción pueden ser consideradas otra parte de la obra en su totalidad. Las interpretaciones de la censura de la autora, que son las supresiones de una traducción, pueden ser consideradas parte del entendimiento total de la obra. Esta censura está incluida en el espacio del análisis entre los textos; es otro texto.

En la versión de "Amalia" de Rosario Ferré, que luego fue traducida por ella misma, hay muchos momentos de cambios de traducción, pero también de cuando se censura a sí misma. Incluso el título mismo incluye la censura. El libro de la primera versión se llama *Papeles de Pandora*, un título sugerente: debido a la mitología de la caja de Pandora, insinúa que hay algo misterioso que descubrir en el libro que causará pánico a todo el mundo y que lo hará cambiar mucho. En el contexto de la obra "Amalia" y sus temas, el título sugiere que la idea de la independencia y del abuso de la mujer son monstruos esperando ponerse en libertad. Además, hay una conexión muy interesante entre el hecho de que Pandora es

una mujer y que la niña en el cuento es una niña: el género de estos personajes nos hace pensar en sus papeles como mujeres en sus respectivos traumas. En la mitología, hay un énfasis grande en el género de Pandora, que existe profundamente en "Amalia;" es un comentario sobre la sociedad que Ferré está sugiriendo. Aún más interesante es el juego de palabras con la palabra "papeles" en el título; Ferré se refiere a los papeles de Pandora que sueltan a los monstruos de la caja y los papeles sociales de la mujer al mismo tiempo.

Sin embargo, en la segunda versión del cuento, Ferré cambió el título del libro a *The Youngest Doll*, el título de un cuento en la colección *Papeles de Pandora*. El título *The Youngest Doll* no contiene ninguna de las connotaciones de la mitología ni de los papeles de la mujer de *Papeles de Pandora*; por eso, es un ejemplo de una gran supresión de la traducción, la cual es casi una técnica que emplea Ferré. Es un ejemplo de censura porque Ferré elimina el contexto de la mitología, los papeles femeninos, y la insinuación de la destrucción completa. Estas eliminaciones en el título de la obra marca la pauta de la censura para el resto del cuento. Los títulos representan lo que está en un libro y el título *The Youngest Doll* no insinúa nada, mientras que *Papeles de Pandora* sugiere mucho. El mensaje que Ferré está comunicando con su autotraducción es que la definición de la obra ha cambiado; es otro texto, otra obra. Además, nos comunica que si leemos el texto en inglés, no quiere que tengamos ninguna idea preconcebida del texto antes de leerlo. Estas dos comunicaciones existen en el espacio entre los dos textos; si no sabes el título de la primera versión, no te darías cuenta de que el de la segunda versión es un título menos revelador que en la versión anterior.

Un ejemplo más drástico de la censura son los fragmentos de textos eliminados en "Amalia." En la primera versión, que tiene un tono más violento y político, hay escenas que no existen en la obra en inglés. En la primera parte de la historia, la parte que habla del incesto, las dos versiones del texto son radicalmente diferentes. En la primera versión en español, esta parte se caracteriza como un flujo de conciencia. Contiene expresiones en inglés y no mucha puntuación. La madre está analizando el incesto durante una conversación con su doctor, como ilustra el siguiente fragmento:

el vicio de los pobres, el diez por ciento de las familias puertorriqueñas se comete incesto, es la urgencia

natural del hombre cuando se acuesta la madre con las hijitas en el mismo cuarto, ya usted sabe en la oscuridad no se sabe, *winstontastesgood like a cigarette should*, pero también es el vicio de los ricos, es el vicio de todo el mundo...(Ferré 55-56).

En este fragmento, el estilo del flujo de consciencia señala el problema como polémico. Se percibe como un problema de los pobres, pero el doctor nos convence de que es un problema universal. El estilo conecta las dos percepciones del incesto para que parezca polémico. En la sección, hay pistas de un desacuerdo con los Estados Unidos, que se supone representa la fuerza contra Puerto Rico. La expresión "*winstontastesgood like a cigarette should*," que es un anuncio de los años 50 de los Estados Unidos, aparece completamente de manera inesperada. Sin embargo, no es por azar; los cigarrillos simbolizan la sofisticación de una compañía de los Estados Unidos. Además, Ferré está insinuando que aunque parece que los Estados Unidos no tiene ninguno de los problemas de los países en vías de desarrollo—como el incesto—y aunque parece un país sofisticado, tiene los mismos problemas.

Esta sección sobre incesto con esta referencia a los Estados Unidos no existe en la segunda versión en inglés que escribió Ferré 15 años después. Lo único que dice el doctor sobre el incesto es, "*It's reasonably common in Puerto Rican families, it happens in 10 percent of them*" (Ferré 48). Hay un momento de censura extrema: la autora eliminó casi una página. Inmediatamente después de mencionar el incesto, la historia continúa: "*And then I hear my mother slam the door angrily after her and go out of the room.*" Esta frase simboliza la acción de terminar algo: en este caso, es la conversación sobre el incesto; el problema sobre el incesto en Puerto Rico ha sido aceptado. Las referencias a los Estados Unidos y la cultura occidental son eliminadas en la segunda versión; también está eliminado el tono acusatorio hacia los Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, la frase todavía enoja a la madre, pero en la segunda versión no hay un intento de discutir la dificultad.

Esta censura nos deja con eliminaciones que descifrar; lo que es más interesante es analizar el espacio, o el otro texto, entre las dos versiones del cuento. A través de las diferencias entre el tono en la primera versión y la segunda, podemos interpretar la diferencia en la ideología de Ferré. Si la obra no fuera autotraducida, no sabíamos este cambio de ideología: los

giros del texto no serían tan extremos si fuera traducida por otra persona tratando de conservar el texto original. En el interesante caso de Ferré, la primera versión revela su actitud hacia los Estados Unidos y las relaciones entre Puerto Rico y los Estados Unidos. Por extensión, esta primera versión muestra su opinión sobre la categoría de estado de Puerto Rico. En la segunda versión, es obvio que Ferré cambió su opinión porque esta fuerte actitud fue eliminada. Por lo tanto, Ferré revela su ideología a través de su escritura, y específicamente, a través de su traducción de su propia obra.

En la segunda versión del cuento, Ferré suprime más de una página del original. El estilo de esta parte también es el *fluir de consciencias*, e incluye algunas palabras y expresiones en inglés, como muestra el siguiente ejemplo:

Entonces oigo *we are shipping M-48 tanks, landing tanks, every fifteen minutes...A7 corsairs, every fifteen minutes, opening their jaws to vomit death, titititititi* la máquina de teletipo...Yo los escuchaba sin comprender...Y Amalia vestida da negro...ahora no era más que una...*muertenapalm, muertelatadesopa...Entonces me quedaba quieta en medio de la serpiente blanca y empezaba a sudar.*

(59-60)

En esta sección hay una tormenta de ideas y lo que emerge es la ideología política y social de Ferré: esta parte contiene opiniones fuertes sobre los Estados Unidos y el papel de la mujer. La invasión de la lengua inglés, combinada con el lenguaje fuerte y referencias a armas estadounidenses, representa las acciones violentas y militaristas de los Estados Unidos. Por supuesto, Ferré no está de acuerdo con estas acciones drásticas, y lo muestra con la personificación de las máquinas en la expresión: "*opening their jaws to vomit death.*" Es obvio que su perspectiva sobre los Estados Unidos tiene que ver con la violencia, la destrucción y la muerte. Además, Ferré opina sobre el papel de la mujer puertorriqueña, que simboliza Amalia. Amalia no puede hacer nada, y tampoco la niña en la historia. Lo único que pueden hacer es callarse y esconderse. Su posición sobre la violencia y la marginalización de la mujer en la conversación sobre las relaciones entre los Estados Unidos y Puerto Rico es fuerte y clara en esta parte.

Sin embargo, en la segunda versión, esta parte no existe. Esta autocensura de una página nos revela la ideología de

Ferré en 1976 y 15 años después en 1991. Según Thomas Case, en su análisis de la obra Rosario Ferré: *A Search for Identity* por Suzanne Hintz, “*Papeles de Pandora* receive close scrutiny, mainly for Ferré’s interest in social reform and the improvement of the status of women in patriarchal society” (671). Estos dos temas emergen muy fuertemente en *Papeles de Pandora*, debido al lenguaje poderoso y a veces violento que emplea Ferré. Pero de manera más interesante, Ferré “admits to altering her texts in translation to a considerable extent, avoiding the vulgar language of the original and toning down the anti-U.S. references” (Case 671). Estas alteraciones suceden debido al paso del tiempo y los cambios de su ideología. Después de 15 años, Ferré cambió su mente para simpatizar mucho más con los Estados Unidos. Su ideología sobre el papel de la mujer cambió también; su tono polémico y revolucionario disminuyó. Es posible que estos giros ocurrieran debido al progreso político y social durante estos años, o que ocurrieran porque Ferré quería escribir al público de los Estados Unidos sin ofenderlo. Lo más probable es que fuera una combinación de los dos: Ferré estaba escribiendo a los Estados Unidos concretamente en 1991 con una ideología menos radical.

La obra completa de Rosario Ferré “Amalia” contiene dos ideologías completamente diferentes dentro de las dos versiones del cuento. Lo que une las dos versiones es el “texto” de las supresiones o de la autocensura de Ferré. Sin analizar esta autocensura, no es posible conocer los cambios de la ideología de Ferré. Por esta razón, la autotraducción es un tipo de escritura muy íntima. Las ideas de la autora están entre las líneas del texto y dentro del espacio que se abre entre los textos; se revelan a través de los cambios y las supresiones de la obra completa. Por eso, la autotraducción es íntima y personal; en el caso de “Amalia,” nos deja con un entendimiento profundo sobre la ideología de Ferré a lo largo de 15 años de su vida. Además, nos deja como lectores en una posición única. Para comprender esta forma de análisis, y esta obra en toda su complejidad, es necesario que el lector sea bilingüe; de hecho, Ferré dirige su obra total solamente a un lector bilingüe. La experiencia de esta obra total es completamente única: la experiencia de la lectura es una práctica que requiere mucho más del lector; y además, redefine lo que se considera una obra literaria.

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Creating Flamenco Poetry and the Skopos Theory of Translation

By Alice Lubic

The goal of any translation is to bring information from one linguistic and cultural context to another, yet that process is not without its difficulties. The most important and most challenging aspect of translation is anticipating the knowledge and needs of the target audience to ensure they receive it as intended. Hence the translator's task is to straddle both the original and the target texts and their contexts. This task acknowledges that the translator is the product of his or her environment, and so this influences the translation intrinsically.

Certainly, not every translation's purpose is the same. For instance in the translation for my Senior Project, the audience's experience is my priority. In this project, I have undertaken the task of translating Spanish-language flamenco songs into English-language poems. Early in the process I discovered that this would be a more personal and creative task than expected. The content of the translation depends entirely upon my own interpretation of the songs, thus to only approximate the lexicon and style of the songs would not suffice. Consequently the poems I created are an attempt to engage with the ideas embedded in flamenco songs. Flamenco is so firmly rooted in tradition, yet the album in particular that I have translated marked a change in this tradition. To reflect that rupture, my poems, too, must break from the traditional themes and words of flamenco, all the while remaining informative and enjoyable to an English-speaking, American audience.

I selected the flamenco artists Paco de Lucía and Camarón de la Isla's collaborative album, *Al verte las flores lloran* (1969), and treated the album essentially as a collection of poems. By isolating the lyrics from their musical context, I place the focus of my work entirely on the words. However, by

stripping the musical element from the songs to get to the words, they are no longer songs. The words are meant to be sung, heard, and felt - not read. Therefore a verbally and technically faithful translation of the lyrics would not carry this powerful and emotional context. To fill that void, I inserted my own creative rendering of the lyrics that seeks to breathe back into them some of the life and significance of flamenco, the gypsies, and Spain at this moment in history.

Obviously, due to the nature of this translation which crosses a boundary of artistic media, some questions arose. Should I imitate the style of the verses, compensating for equivalent aural qualities? Do I translate idioms and slang into American equivalents to suit my audience? What should flamenco poetry sound like, and what should it convey? To guide my decisions, I sought a translational theory that would suit my unique problems. Accordingly, I implemented Skopos Theory, a form of Action and Functionalist Theory that advocates for all the choices in the translation process to be faithful to the fundamental feature of the original: its purpose. Once the purpose of a translation is identified, Skopos Theory affords the translator a great amount of agency as a cultural and informational ambassador. Therefore, as the translator, I was awarded the creative license necessary to turn these songs into poetry.

The first obstacle in this process was to determine if my work would be a translation or an adaptation, due to the fact that music and poetry are on two different planes. The differences between translation and adaptation are subtle, both implying a sense of transferring information from one form to another, creating something entirely new. Yet the definitions themselves do not offer an explanation for the difference, causing misconceptions or assumptions to misguide the readers' understanding of the translation. In alignment with the functionalist approaches to translation, specifically that of the Skopos Theory, the difference between adaptation and translation depends upon two factors. The first is the purpose of both the original and the translated text, and the second is the actions of and liberties taken by the translator as an agent culture-specific informational exchange. In my case, I change the purpose of the texts from something meant to be heard and felt, to a text intended to be read. The changes I make to the text are within my power as the translator to render the

the text to be suitable for a new use. To meet the requirements of that use, I focused on the language, lexicon, and literary devices present in the lyrics that make them poetry. It follows, then, that Skopos Theory addresses my specific needs.

Put forth in the 1970s by German linguist and scholar Hans J. Vermeer, Skopos Theory puts the focus of a translation on its action and purpose. Vermeer writes, "Any form of translational action, including therefore translation itself, may be conceived as an action, as the name implies. Any action has an aim, a purpose. [...] The word Skopos, then, is a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation." He goes on to say that an action produces a result, which can be "a new situation or event, and possibly to a 'new' object" (221). In this case, the new object is the poem created from the flamenco song.

The language of Skopos Theory reinforces its purpose. The original work is the "source text" and the translated product is the "target text". This highlights the fact that a source text is composed for a source culture in terms and situations that would be recognizable to those people. For this reason, part of the theory stipulates that a target text must be "interpretable as coherent with the [target text] receiver's situation", meaning that the translation must be coherent for the receivers, taking into account their circumstances and presumed knowledge (Du 2129). As mentioned earlier, anticipating the audience's situation and knowledge is a challenging but crucial part of the process.

In discussing translational theory, it is all too easy to conflate different terms and/or use them synonymously. Yet depending on the specific theory, the vocabulary changes dramatically. This is the case in Skopos Theory when determining a translation's adequacy to the original, and its equivalence. An "adequate" translation is one that is adequate to the requirements of its defined purpose. In Skopos Theory scholar Christiane Nord's book on functionalist approaches to translation, she defers to fellow scholar Katharina Reiss's description of an adequate translation. To Reiss, an adequate translation is the product of a "goal-oriented selection of signs that are considered appropriate for the communicative purpose defined in the translation assignment" (Reiss qtd. in Nord 35). So it is adequacy rather than equivalence that is essential to Skopos Theory because equivalence signifies an equal communicative value, especially regarding the "words, phrases, sentences,

[and] syntactic structures" of the two texts (Nord 35-36). In this theory, the technical equivalence takes a back seat to the adequacy of the translation in achieving its goal.

Therefore, in my translations, I have opted not to attempt an equivalent translation by closely adhering to the actual words and phrases themselves. Instead, my poems appropriately communicate my intended purpose, as previously stated, thereby making the products adequate. Thus I began this personal and creative endeavor in which I am faithful to my own interpretation of the texts, which I transmit through my translations. I created poems apart from their original musical context, thereby rediscovering and offering anew their messages, linguistic qualities, and significance.

The poems on the following page put forth several obstacles that required a cultural interpretation in order to translate them. The first instance of this is in first stanza. The original image is of *mosquitas* which I take to mean "little flies" or "pests", thus referring to the people in town who gossip about the poetic voice and his lover. I want to refer to the image of having little bugs bite at them, so I retain the word "bite", figuring it would also lend itself to an image of the gossip being hurtful and bothersome. Next, although the syntax of the second stanza sounds unnatural, it seems important to preserve the poetic structure when possible. For this verse, the repetition of "Juanola" as the first word appears to maintain its poetic sense, which justifies the unusual structure. In the third stanza, the title line features the word *llorar*, which means "to cry". Yet I chose the word "weep" as it seems to capture the image of foliage or plants that move limply, like a weeping willow. This makes the image more potent because when this woman appears, all the flowers in the garden cry at the sight of her beauty, but by inserting "weep" I imagine them as somehow giving up or bowing down to her, knowing their beauty cannot compare. Lastly, the word *odóbone* in the final stanza is left in italics because it is untranslatable. The word is presumable in *caló*, the language of the Spanish gypsies, for which I could not find a definition. Hence I left it in italics to preserve the foreign quality of the poem, for this word would stand out even to a Spanish-speaker.

Al verte las flores lloran

Para José Monje Cruz y Francisco Gustavo Sánchez Gomes

Lere lere lelele, ay...
Métete en aquel rincón
donde las mosquitas no te coman,
cuenta ya no le doy a nadie,
primita, de tu persona.

De la morería
Juanola le puso el cura
Juanola pa toa la vía.

Al verte las flores lloran
cuando entras en el jardín,
porque las flores quisieran
toítas parecerse a ti.

Retírate que la gente
no conozca nuestro amor,
contra más lejos esté el santo
más cerca la devoción.

Y el día que tú naciste
nacieron toítas las flores,
y en la pila el bautismo
cantaron los ruiséñores.

Ay odóbone
toma la chaquetiquita
que dame los calzones.

Upon Seeing You the Flowers Weep

by José Monje Cruz y Francisco Gustavo Sánchez Gomes

Translation by Alice Lubic

Lere lere lelele, ay...
Keep away, out of sight
where their gossip can't bite,
I won't speak to anyone
about you anymore.

She came from the Moorish quarter,
'Juanola' the priest baptized her,
Juanola is her name for life.

Upon seeing you, the flowers weep
as you enter the garden,
because all the flowers
longed for loveliness like yours.

Leave now so they won't
discover our love.
The further the saint,
the closer the devotion.

And on the day you were born
all the flowers were born too,
and in the baptistery,
nightingales sang.

Ay, odóbone
Get your little jacket
And pass my underwear.

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Harmonies Never Heard: Reflections on Roberto Juarroz and Translation
By Kevin P. Soto

The way up and the way down are one and the same

- Heraclitus

You must realize that the poem is nothing and that translation is possible – which is not to say that it's easy; it is merely poetry re-begun.

- Yves Bonnefoy

Two Images

Shortly after flying back home from visiting a friend, I suffered a severe migraine attack. I was in the passenger seat of the car looking out on a crowded freeway when I felt my plane of sight dissolve in mere seconds like a film reel caught on fire. I covered my eyes for a few minutes and opened them to see that all objects were hidden by the halation of street lamps, which seemed to spread over everything. Back home I turned out the lights in my room and retreated into the comfort of my bed – under the sheets the dark distended and I felt myself to be at the center of an endless space. I fell asleep and woke up a few hours later. When my sister asked if I was feeling better, I made out to be like I was fine, merely dazed, but my head was being compressed by light.

A few weeks later I was invited to speak at a conference in Montevideo about a previously unseen manuscript of a novel by Lautreamont¹ found among the possessions of a book collector in Paris who turned out to be, as fate would strangely have it, a nephew of Artaud, a writer who found a kindred spirit in the author of *Maldoror*.

On the plane to Montevideo I quickly fell asleep and dreamt that I had died. In the moment of my death I grasped a truth that is beyond all words, nestled deep within a quiet desert. I woke up shortly before arriving at the airport, where my friend picked me up and took me out for dinner. In the

In the middle of the conversation I could not shake the feeling that everything was a grotesque performance and that language was a cruel punishment that only served to push us further away from whatever hidden desires that crystallized deep within us. If there was a pleasure to be found in death, I thought, it was a return to a singular pre-verbal state. Yet I found myself clinging to meaningless signifiers out of some perverse desire.

Exegesis: The Void in the Word

In this emotional state I found myself drawn to the poems of Roberto Juarroz, whose name came up during a talk with a friend about poetry that dealt closely with philosophical themes (specifically Wallace Stevens and his stubborn insistence on the yawning abyss that separates (or binds) reality and imagination). On his recommendation I picked up a collection of *Vertical Poetry* and read through most of it quickly. Not much is known about Juarroz and what scant information is left to plumb about his life holds little interest, both for the academics and those drawn to thrilling narratives. Juarroz was born in Argentina in 1925 and studied philosophy and library science. He taught at the University of Buenos Aires until his death in 1995. His first collection of *Vertical Poetry* was published in 1958 at the age of 33, following much deliberation over finding a voice that approached poetry “not as an activity but as absolute deliverance to a space that sought answers to major metaphysical questions” (*Poesia Vertical* 12). His insistence on finding a voice paid off – although Juarroz is frequently grouped with his contemporary avant-garde poets in South America, he remains unclassifiable. His complete aversion to the personal, the anecdotal, the historical, and the emotional lends his vertical poems an aphoristic quality found in Zen kōans and the fragments of pre-Socratic philosophers (much more can be said about the philosophical affinities between Heraclitus and Juarroz and their obsession with paradox and uncertainty, with Juarroz going as far as to borrow an image of a road going up and down from Heraclitus). Perhaps one of the most remarkable elements in Juarroz’s body of work is a consistency in tone and themes. Like Kafka and Bernhard, his work comes to us fully realized from its first appearance in 1958; the first collection of *Vertical Poetry* serves as a template for the following fourteen collections of the same name, using many of the same images and motifs to

expound a certain set of ideas – prominently at the center of Juarroz’s work is a suspicion toward language and any kind of reality/identity that is not rooted in uncertainty and constant flux. Unlike Neruda and Vallejo, he never experiments with socially oriented poetry – his work remains defiantly inward, devoid of any authorial *I*, preferring instead *we* or *one*.

If his style makes it difficult to place him in an artistic movement in Latin American letters, it seems far appropriate to place him in a philosophical tradition whose members have sought ceaselessly to mark the limits of reason and logic – part of an old tradition that begins with the apophatic writings of Pseudo-Dionysius and that has been carried out in the past century by anti-systemic philosophers like Heidegger and Derrida, who have sought to dismantle a humanist tradition that places man and reason at the center of being. Of these writers, perhaps Derrida’s project is the closest to being Juarroz’s poetic counterpart in philosophy and critical theory. Both writers are interested in the third disruptive element that unsettles fixed binaries and creates a playful friction between the two oppositions, preferring to dwell in uncertainty rather than privilege one meaning over the other. And it is always this tertiary element that casts the poem into uncertainty – at times the disruption is a concrete image that has no clear relationship with the pair that it is joined with: birth, death, and a flower (*Vertical Poetry* 5:10). In other poems the third element cannot be named; it can only be approached through negation and unanswerable questions.

A Stain on Silence and Nothingness

One of the major difficulties I faced in translating Juarroz was the danger of making the poem about something, turning an abstract image into a concrete one. This problem came up in the first poem from *12th Vertical Poetry*. The line reads in Spanish: “en el atrás sin sueño de los pájaros...” My first attempt at translation read: “in the dreamless back of birds.” I felt satisfied with the line, even pleased with the alliterative “back of birds.” Upon revising, a colleague pointed out the problem with “back” and its association with the physical body, which was out of place in a poem that dealt explicitly with edges and silence. Ultimately, I decided to rework the line into: “in the dreamless space behind birds,” which on the surface loses the plainness of “back of birds” but, much to its advantage, loses the physical dimension that threatens to

subvert the delicate explorations of empty spaces.

The language of *Vertical Poetry* is accessible and despite its complex philosophical themes, is free of jargon and gongorisms. But the contradictory images in a Juarroz poem always fail to resolve; efforts toward a clear explication lead inevitably to doubt and disquietude, which seem like integral parts in the experience of reading Juarroz. In the face of these textual difficulties I found comfort in a quote from Bonnefoy’s essay on translating poetry: “Where a text has its felicities (accidental or not), its cruxes, its density – its unconscious – the translation must stick to the surface, even if its own cruxes crop up anywhere.” So, I attempted to recreate the image in English as literally as possible, resisting all impulses to simplify or unpack an image, hoping that the enigmatic quality of the poems would translate unconsciously into English. But as was demonstrated by the previous example, this approach toward “literalness” is not without its dangers if not paired with a careful reading of the poems, keeping constantly in mind Juarroz’s exploration of the interstices between life and death, sound and silence, presence and absence.

Regarding poetic language, I would often have to remind myself that I was translating a lyrical poem and not a dry, philosophical tract. Given Juarroz’s metaphysical explorations that are often dealt with in philosophical texts, there was always the temptation to use the language that I associated with philosophers when translating Juarroz – resulting in a verse that was at moments less than graceful, using “thinking” (with Heidegger’s “What is Called Thinking” in mind) when “thought” was the better option. The sixth poem from *Ninth Vertical Poetry* consists of a variation on the structure: “X se apoya en Y pero en verdad cuelga de Z.” “Apoya” has strong connotations of a physical action that is conveyed by “lean on.” More importantly, there is a tension in the image of abstractions like a center or a presence partaking in a concrete action. But the word I used in the first draft was “rest” which was taken from Aristotle’s discussion of motion and absolute rest in his *Physics*. The connection between Aristotle and Juarroz is most likely a false invention of mine. Ultimately, I decided that “rest” was steeped too deeply in the world of the scientific and the abstract; both “lean” and “hang” convey a physicality that stands in stark contrast with Juarroz’s typical explorations of the void and the center – it seemed like my

concern with making the abstract into something concrete returned in an inverted form.

An Experiment in Translating Desire: Return to Pure Image

In the waning autumn days of 2019 I came down with several migraines of unprecedented intensity within the span of a few days. My doctor later blamed the changes in atmospheric conditions that came with an abrupt transition of the seasons, but that explanation ignored the fact that the migraines and their accompanying visions followed a period of intense work that resulted in a novel and several translations. In my waking-dream state I thought that the migraines were my punishment for having thought myself so arrogant as to be able to write with the intention of communicating an inner life that could never have its place in language; for the instant that a sound exits my mouth its meaning is lost before it reaches someone's ears.

But I cannot commit to silence, there is no such thing as the absence of sound in any case, I thought, because the absence of sound presupposes a presence of sound, and if there was no sound in the first place then there was no self to give up to language, no self that translated the poems of Roberto Juarroz and no self that tortured itself with a mad desire to speak its life in hoarse cries. I have abandoned my home in search of mysterious things and with me I have taken the roses, the sirens, the light that hangs in the center of a vacuum, and my translations of the Juarroz poems, which will continue to be revised until I arrive in that space where the word and desire come together,

Sanchez Aguilar, Diego. Introduction. *Poesia Vertical*. Catedra, 2014. 12. Print.

Interviews

*A Philosophy of Translation,
An Interview with Melanie Nicholson*
By Wilmary Rodriguez

Melanie Nicholson is the director of Spanish Studies at Bard College. Her translations have been featured in the *Yale Review*, the *American Poetry Review*, and *Contemporary Women Authors of Latin America*. She has also produced critical texts such as *Surrealism in Latin American Literature: Searching for Breton's Ghost*, which was published in 2013. Professor Nicholson has been with Bard since 1995. Her main academic focus are 20th century Latin American poetry and literary surrealism.

Wilmary Rodriguez: What does it mean to translate?

Melanie Nicholson: Everything we communicate is translation. The word translate comes from Latin meaning "to carry across." In Spanish, it means to guide or to lead across. I prefer the latter definition. To me, translation is not a task, but rather it is a human's responsibility to carry a text across to another space. I think of myself as a guide.

WR: What is your philosophy of translation, and what is the difference between translating and interpreting?

MN: I don't believe that one can translate word-for-word. In Italian it's easier, but from Spanish to English is almost impossible. The translator has a responsibility to the text and the author, but they also have the responsibility to recreate the text in a new language. A valuable literary text is a negotiation of moving back and forth from the text. I find it irritating when translators take huge liberties with the text. It is legal as long as you don't call it translation: it is an imitation. Imitations have artistic merit, but they should be differentiated from what translation truly signifies.

WR: How do you choose what you are going to translate? Are there any guiding principles? Do you wait for a text to inspire you?

MN: For me it happens in many different ways. I like to translate poetry that is difficult to translate, but not impossible.

WR: Is every text, in theory, translatable? Is there a text that you believe to somehow be untranslatable? Are there genres of writing that are more difficult to translate for you? More fun?

MN: I believe that any text has the potential to be translatable. Sometimes I start a translation, and have this realization: I can do it, but it won't have any value. The texts that are the hardest to translate are contemporary poems, largely due to the poetic values of the original languages the rhythms, for example. While poetry is the hardest to do, it is very interesting to translate a piece when there is a very peculiar voice.

WR: Have you ever been tempted to revise your translations after they've been published?

MN: Always. Translation is always a work in progress.

WR: Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience as a translator?

MN: I encourage every student that speaks another language to start translating as early as they can.

Living with Language,
An Interview with Charlotte Mandell '90
By Emely Paulino

Charlotte Mandell is an award-winning literary translator from Harford, Connecticut. She graduated from Bard College in 1990 having studied French literature and film theory. She has translated works of poetry, fiction and philosophy from French to English and has received awards from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Modern Language Association. In this interview, she discusses her experience with translation, its challenges and rewards, as well as her most recent project:

Emely Paulino: Can you tell us about your experience with translating?

Charlotte Mandell: I remember the first revelation I had, discovering when I was 10 that people spoke other languages, and that words were not absolute but relative — pain could mean bread. This was major news for me. I was reading Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* at the time, which talks about relative realities, and how our own reality is shaped by other people's version of reality — so this discovery of experience being shaped by language, and of everything being relative, was kind of a revelation for me. I think that's when I became really interested in language. I remember the first conversation I ever had in French, with an old man in a tiny train station in Switzerland, and being so amazed that I could express myself in a language that was not English, and be understood.

So in high school — I went to Boston Latin School, the oldest public school in the country, founded in 1635 — they let you concentrate in either languages, or history, or science & math, so obviously I concentrated in language, focusing on French. Latin is a requirement there, so I took 5 years of Latin

along with 2 years of ancient Greek. I think I was one of the few people at Latin school that really enjoyed studying Latin! I was in an advanced placement course where we translated Virgil's *Aeneid*, and I loved doing that — in fact I recently found my translation in a box in the attic — maybe when I'm old I'll go back to that and revise it...

When I went to Bard I majored in French (and continued studying Latin, with William Mullen), and translated a book of poems by a contemporary French poet named Jean-Paul Auxeméry for my senior project. That was my first book-length translation — before that I had just translated poems for journals. Translating a contemporary poet was interesting, since I was able to correspond with him and ask him about words or phrases I wasn't sure about — I included our correspondence in the back of my project.

After that, I guess I was hooked! I realized I didn't enjoy doing anything as much as translating. I considered going to graduate school for French — I received scholarships to Brown and Rutgers — but I really wasn't interested in going back to school, just in translating books. Around the time I was realizing that, my friend Pierre Joris (also a Bard alum, and a poet and translator) was asked by Stanford University Press to translate a book of essays, *La Part du feu*, by Maurice Blanchot. He didn't have time to do it, so he recommended me; I sent in a sample chapter, which Helen Tartar, then the editor in chief at Stanford, liked, and that was the beginning of my translating career. I went on to translate two more Blanchot books for Stanford, along with books by other authors. It was kind of a baptism by fire, since Blanchot is notoriously difficult to translate. I think I was 25 or so when I translated *La Part du feu* (which I called *The Work of Fire*).

EP: How do you approach a new assignment?

CM: My one rule is that I never read a book before I translate it! I feel more creatively involved in the process that way — as if I'm writing the book from scratch. I figure the author didn't have the luxury of reading his book before he wrote it, so why should the translator? It makes translating much more alive to me, and more interesting — I really don't know what's coming next.

Then of course, once I'm done with the initial draft, I

revise again and again — I might go through three or four revisions before I'm happy with the final draft. The main thing for me, in translating novels, is finding the narrator's voice — once I feel I've captured the voice, the translation flows very easily. This was particularly true for Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones* and for Mathias Enard's *Zone*.

EP: Was is the most challenging part about translating?

CM: I've translated a lot of books over the course of my career, some of which I've been more interested in than others — I suppose the hardest thing for me was translating a book I wasn't very interested in. Fortunately I've reached a point in my career when I don't have to take on projects that don't interest me. Otherwise, I suppose the second most challenging thing for me is being able to re-create the "original" in my own language and making it sound authentic — not like translationese, but like something that was written in my language. Finding that voice I was talking about earlier.

EP: What is the most rewarding part about translating?

CM: Being able to re-create a great book — translate not just the language, but the feel of the book, the Thing Itself. Being able to make it live as vividly and interestingly in my language as it did in its original. Making it breathe, giving it life.

EP: Can you talk about your most recent translation project?

CM: I just finished translating a huge (1800-page) biography of Jean Cocteau! Actually I co-translated it — I translated the first 900 pages, and my friend Lauren Elkin translated the second 900. It's for Yale University Press, by Claude Arnaud. It took over a year, so it's a huge relief to finish that finally. Actually there are a few recent projects — I also recently finished another longish (1,000-page) book on altruism, by a French Buddhist monk named Matthieu Ricard, for Little, Brown. And before that I translated a much shorter (200-page) book on Syria called *Syrian Notebooks* by Jonathan Littell, for Verso Books in the UK. So, it's been a busy year or two...

EP: Can you talk about the role of the translator in the process of book publishing?

CM: Hmm... It used to be that the translator was just hired as a kind of afterthought, to translate a book as quickly as possible for a publisher who wasn't really interested in translation as a literary art. That's changing now, though — some publishers, like Archipelago and Open Letter, publish only translations, and some publishers, like the new press called Two Lines, actually invite translators to suggest books worth publishing — that's how my translation of Jonathan Littell's *The Fata Morgana Books* came into being, after I suggested that (I also suggested Mathias Enard's *Parle-leur de batailles, de rois et d'éléphants*, about Michelangelo designing a bridge in Constantinople, but they chose the Littell). Quite a few of the books I translated for Melville House were suggested by me: Proust's pastiches, *The Lemoine Affair* (a wonderful series of stories in which Proust writes in the style of different authors, including Balzac and Flaubert, and which had never been published in English as a book before), Balzac's *The Girl with the Golden Eyes*, and Jules Verne's *The Castle in Transylvania* were all books I wanted to translate and suggested to the publisher. So translators are definitely having more say in what gets published these days, I'm glad to say. Right now I'm looking for a publisher for a new graphic novel by Mathias Enard, called *Tout sera oublié*, or *All This Will Be Forgotten* — I hope I can find a good publisher for it!

